

Soft-Spoken Man Who Gets Things Done

John M. Goshko profiles the next U.N. chief, who faces the difficult task of reforming the organization

KOFI ANNAN of Ghana, chosen last week to be the next U.N. secretary general, has spent his adult life as an international civil servant, shuffling around the world in sensitive but largely anonymous tasks for the United Nations.

The U.S.-educated Annan, 58, is well-liked by colleagues with whom he has labored for three decades in the U.N. system in such little-noticed areas as budget analysis and personnel management. His style represents a big change from that of the current secretary general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, an imperious, high-profile Egyptian diplomat who could go months without talking to his key subordinates and who frequently treated the ambassadors of major powers condescendingly.

It is too early to tell how a longtime U.N. bureaucrat like Annan will meet the challenges of guiding the world body into the 21st century. He must help to map the priorities that the United Nations will follow in the post-Cold War period, find ways of getting the organization through the worst financial crisis in its 51-year history and satisfy U.S. demands for far-reaching reforms.

It would be a tall order for someone with a far more distinctive record of success in diplomacy or politics. Now, given Annan's relative anonymity, there are questions

about whether, as a creature of the system, he will have the boldness and imagination to lead a restructuring that the United States and its supporters hope will involve cutting large numbers of employees and eliminating many traditional U.N. practices and activities.

Yet, while even many experts in international affairs would have trouble recognizing his name, the soft-spoken Annan commands considerable respect among those who have seen him in action.

That has been especially true during the last three years when Annan held what has been at once the most vital and controversial job within the United Nations — head of peacekeeping activities in such trouble spots as Somalia and Bosnia.

Annan became undersecretary general for peacekeeping in 1993 at a time when the Bosnia operations had caused many conservative Republicans in Congress to become bitterly critical of Boutros-Ghali and his representative in Bosnia, Asahi Akashi, for their alleged appeasement of Serb aggression against the Bosnian Muslims. So intense was their anger that it led the Clinton administration to conclude that relations between Congress and the United Nations could be repaired only if the United States vetoed Boutros-Ghali's re-election.

Nevertheless, by early this year, several Republican foreign policy

strategists on Capitol Hill — among them aides to GOP presidential candidate Robert J. Dole — were enthusiastically saying that Annan, who personally went to Bosnia to take over from Akashi, would make a superb secretary general. Prompting their admiration was what they regarded as his even-handedness and skillful performance in guiding U.N. peacekeeping forces through the handoff last year to a NATO-led force.

At the United Nations, where the U.S. veto of Boutros-Ghali caused great resentment among the other members, the endorsement of American conservatives should have been the kiss of death for anyone aspiring to the secretary general's office. But, when Annan was among four Africans who declared their candidacy last week, the universal perception of him as the "American candidate" did not stop him from springing into a lead.

"He brings a certain style to things," said a senior U.S. diplomat, who declined to be identified, in discussing why Annan is able to appeal with such ease and popularity to American conservatives and Third World radicals. "He is respectful, he listens carefully, he is collegial, and he never loses sight of what is practical."

Muhammed Sacirbey, Bosnia's ambassador to the United Nations and a frequent harsh critic of U.N. peacekeepers in his country, pointedly singles out Annan for restoring what the Muslims regarded as fairness to U.N. operations there. Sacir-

bey said: "People trust him because he is honest."

Others cite Annan's sense of humor. During the maneuvering that preceded his election, France raised questions about whether he speaks French. Annan's colleagues say that when asked him about it, Annan replied in lilting West African tones, "I now speak English with a French accent."

Born into a family of traditional tribal chiefs, he began his education in Ghana and, with the aid of a Ford Foundation grant, left home in 1959 to study at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he earned a bachelor's degree in economics. He later studied at the Institut Universitaire de Haute Etudes Internationales in Geneva and at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which awarded him a master's degree in management.

Annan entered the U.N. system in 1959 by joining the World Health Organization. In the 1970s, he returned home for two years to head Ghana's tourism development board. But the rest of his adult life has been spent with the United Nations and its affiliated agencies, either in New York or in its outposts in Addis Ababa, Cairo and Geneva.

Annan's wife, Nanne Lagergren, is the daughter of a noted international jurist and the niece of Raul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who rescued thousands of Hungarian Jews from the Nazis before disappearing into what is believed to have been Soviet imprisonment and death at the end of World War II.

Court Rules Bare Breasts Are Legal

Howard Schneider in Toronto

AS SHE strolled bare-breasted down the streets of Guelph one day in 1991, Gwen Jacobs slowed traffic, caused mothers to snatch away their children and prompted at least one group of men to reach for their binoculars.

But she didn't, Ontario's highest court has decided, do anything obscene, indecent or otherwise prosecutable.

A three-judge panel of the Ontario Court of Appeals ruled last week that the female chest, publicly displayed, is no more offensive to community standards of decency than a bare-chested man at the bench or a construction worker cooling off without his shirt.

In so concluding, they overturned Jacobs's conviction of three years ago on indecency charges in a case that prompted half-naked protests throughout Canada on her behalf.

She had been fined \$75 after deciding, on a humid summer day in 1991, to doff her shirt and stroll through Guelph, a rural town 50 miles southwest of Toronto. Along the way, she refused requests by police and neighbors that she cover up. She said she was only doing what men did, and didn't like being treated differently because of society's narrowly sexual interpretation of her breasts.

The appellate court agreed, in a ruling that opens the way for women to forgo top-burdens throughout Canada's largest province. A similar ruling in the New York courts four years ago, stemming from a "Top-Free Picnic" in Rochester, has allowed women the right to go topless in that state, but there apparently has been no rush to exercise it.

The Ontario decision can be appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada within 60 days, but Jacobs's lawyer said she would expect the same outcome there. The Ontario judges had no qualms with existing laws or definitions of decency established in prior cases, she said, but believe that women's breasts "in and of themselves" don't offend local standards.

The lawyer, Margaret Buist, said the case hinged on the distinction between "walking along the street swinging your breasts, saying come and get it . . . and doing exactly the same as a man would do on a hot summer day." Blatantly sexual exposure, or the commercial use of bare-breasted bodies for advertising, for example, would still be against the law, she said.

The judges "looked at the evidence, looked at the fact that traffic slowed down, children were taken away by their mothers," Buist said. "There is no real harm here to the public. The whole issue is the context. We argued that a woman's breasts are not inherently sexual, in and of themselves."

In a statement released through her lawyer, Jacobs said that is precisely the point she hoped to make.

The Guardian Weekly

It's still the economy, stupid

THE YEAR IN THE USA
Martin Walker

THE YEAR was dominated by the presidential election campaign, and Bill Clinton's astute management of the economy, of the Republican Congress and of the legislative agenda, which all served to ensure his easy re-election. This looks to have been far more certain in retrospect than it appeared as the year began, or even as late as August, when the veteran Republican Senate leader Robert Dole seemed at the time of his party convention in San Diego to be mounting a strong challenge.

The elections of 1996 were always going to be dominated by four main themes. The first was the degree to which the incumbent Bill Clinton could shake off the nagging scandals that mushroomed from the original Whitewater investment in Arkansas, and claim his reward for the best economic performance of any of the advanced industrial countries.

The second was the ability of the Republicans to capitalize on their stunning success in the 1994 midterm elections, when they recaptured both Houses of Congress for the first time in 40 years. This was to hinge not only on the quality of the presidential candidate that they elected, but also on his ability to bridge the disturbing gap between the religious right, and its more materialist wing, whose main concern was economic growth and tax cuts.

The third theme of importance was the fate of the third party in American politics: whether the Texas billionaire Ross Perot would run again; and how far he could repeat the success of his 1992 performance, when he won more than 19 million votes, securing the support of one voter in five. In the event, he won one vote in 12, sufficient to deny Clinton the mandate he craved, and to allow his critics to claim that more Americans voted against him than for his re-election.

The final theme of the 1996 elections was, in the long run, perhaps the most significant. It was the double implosion of the fundamental consensus on which domestic and foreign policy had been run since Franklin Roosevelt's day, and the degree to which a replacement consensus was beginning to emerge.

President Roosevelt was the last leader to confront a collapse of the broad and agreed principles around which the political debates on foreign and domestic policies were staged. The old virtues of economic policy fell apart with the Great De-

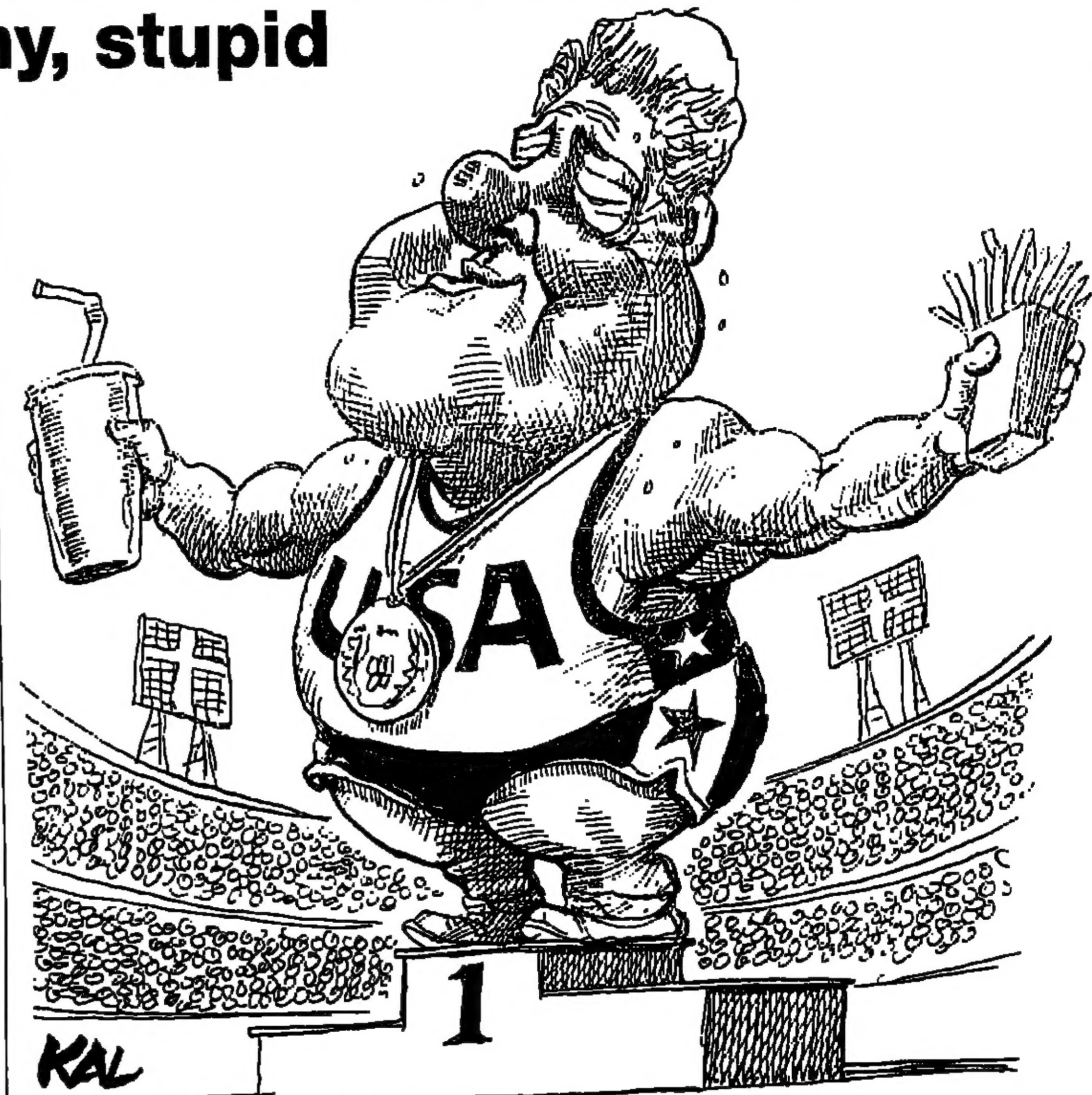
pression, in far more critical and perilous circumstances. Roosevelt's New Deal, later buttressed by Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, was to establish what became the political economy of modern times: mixed public and private enterprise, in which the pre-eminence of federal government lay around 20 per cent of gross domestic product to provide social security and welfare and generous public investment in education and the national infrastructure.

Under threat throughout the Reagan years, but sustained by the Democratic majorities in Congress, this New Deal system was fully undermined by the manifesto of the Clinton campaign in 1992. Campaigning as a "New Democrat" who was determined to break out of the party's shrinking electoral base in the cities and make the Democrats electable in the middle-class suburbs, Clinton foreshadowed a departure from this Roosevelt-Johnson tradition. He promised "an end to welfare as we know it", a middle-class tax cut, 100,000 extra police on the streets and a shrunken and more entrepreneurial federal government.

The Republican Congress elected in 1994 sought to take this much further. They promised a constitutional amendment to require that the federal budget be balanced, term limits to restrict congressmen to eight years in office and senators to 12, and prepared to control the fast-rising costs of the health subsidies for the elderly (Medicare) and the poor (Medicaid). Clinton managed to slow and finally to block the Republican charge, but in his 1996 State of the Union address conceded the essential principle when he declared, "The era of Big Government is over."

The foreign policy consensus that had sustained US diplomacy around the leadership of global military coalition since 1941 was also in disrepair after the end of the cold war. Clinton, building on the free trade negotiations with Canada and Mexico negotiated in the Reagan and Bush years, offered a replacement.

The real core of Clinton's foreign policy was economic, rooted in his conviction that the cold war world of geo-politics and arms control summits was giving way to a new era of geo-economics and trade pacts. Clinton's Pacific Rim summit in Seattle in 1993 pointed the way. His determination to pass the North American Free Trade Agreement and the Gatt world trade agreement, although he had to split his own party in Congress to do so, began to suggest a Clinton Doctrine: that the world should become a global market of free trading democracies, with the giant (and vestigial) US economy as both linchpin and guarantor.



Mandela Broadens Amnesty Offer for Political Crimes

Lynne Duke in Johannesburg

SOUTH AFRICA'S truth-telling process received a shot in the arm last week when President Nelson Mandela broadened his government's offers of amnesty to those who confess to political crimes. The much-sought move was followed by an apartheid-era army chief's announcement that he would seek amnesty and tell all to the nation's truth commission.

Mandela extended the deadline by which people can apply to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for amnesty in return for a full confession of their deeds; they will now have until March 10, rather than until December 14. He also called for extending the eligibility period for crimes to qualify for amnesty — from the current December 1993 cutoff to May 10, 1994, the day Mandela was sworn in as South Africa's first black president.

Retired Gen. Constant Viljoen, head of the South African Defense Force from 1980 to 1985, announced that he now will seek amnesty. He was one of the leaders of a white right-wing uprising in the spring of 1991 that began with a deadly bombing campaign and ended in a failed attempt to take over the black "homeland" of Bophuthatswana and derail the nation's first all-races election. After some of Viljoen's men were summarily executed before international television cameras, he helped Mandela negotiate an end to the so-called "Battle of Boj."

Viljoen, leader of the Freedom Front party, has emerged as one of the white political leaders who has

Mandela's ear. Mandela said that he extended the application deadline and, prospectively, the period covered, in recognition of the constructive role that Viljoen had played.

Mandela was also under pressure from the truth commission's leader, retired Anglican archbishop Desmond Tutu, to extend the amnesty deadlines.

Others involved in right-wing attacks, including the 1994 bombing campaign, are likely to also seek amnesty in what truth commission members expect to be a surge of amnesty pleas from across the political spectrum.

Parliament must amend legislation governing the truth commission's operations to extend the amnesty-qualifying period.

The commission was established after the 1994 election to offer reparations to victims of apartheid-era human rights violations as well as amnesty to perpetrators who confess. The process is aimed at helping South Africa come to grips with its racist and violent past of white-minority rule.

Even before the application deadline had been extended, an avalanche of amnesty requests had flooded into truth commission offices. And last week about 60 applications for amnesty were sent to the truth commission from the ruling African National Congress. Among the applicants were three sitting cabinet ministers: Defense Minister Joe Modise, who was chief of the ANC's military wing; safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi; and Posts and Telecommunications Minister Jay Naidoo.



Mandela signs the new South African constitution into law in Sharpeville last week watched by Cyril Ramaphosa, chairman of the constitutional assembly

PHOTOGRAPH BY ADIL BRADLOW

in San Diego. Clinton signed into law three bills, each passed with Republican support, which defined and consolidated the new domestic consensus.

The first was to raise the minimum wage from \$4.25 to \$5.15 an hour, a long-standing Democratic objective; few had predicted Clinton's success in persuading the Republicans to agree. The second was the Kennedy-Kassebaum health insurance bill, which was a not unreasonable second-best to Clinton's initially grander hopes of a national health insurance system. It ensured that any worker who changed or lost his job would retain his existing health insurance.

The third was the welfare reform bill, which ended the 60-year-old principle established under Roosevelt's New Deal that in the last resort the federal government would provide for impoverished mothers and children. Welfare henceforth would be limited to two years at a time, and to a maximum of five in any individual life, and it would require a readiness to work. Its administration was entrusted to the individual states, a significant surrender of federal power.

The guiding idea behind the new domestic consensus was to make a sharp, and almost Victorian distinction, between the deserving and the undeserving poor. The deserving poor were those who worked, or were prepared to — the glorification of work had always lain at the

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Race that's littered with obstacles

THE essay by Yasmin Alibhai-Brown (Black looks and white lies, December 22) was not entirely right. The people of California (did not "vote to ban gender and race quotas in government posts" — nor could they have done so as there have never been any. The far right in the United States would have you believe that virtually every black man or woman in employment owes their place to a quota, but that doesn't mean it is true. Quotas do exist in the US but their use is very limited. None the less, the fact of their existence has done great PR damage to the cause of equal opportunities, helped along by some of the excesses perpetrated at the fringes. Quotas have no place in thinking about equality in the UK but the choice is not between quotas or nothing. Yasmin Alibhai-Brown got seriously close to suggesting that little can be achieved until white men have adjusted their heads. This is a pessimistic and impractical prescription. Of course we all wish that racist, sexist or simply patronising ideas did not exist. However, you cannot tell all non-Wasps that they have to wait until this larger issue has been resolved.

John Carr, London

power. It had its last and most comprehensively unattractive outing when Mrs Thatcher used it to take on a tottering military dictatorship in the South Atlantic. Her example was soon followed by English football fans on the terraces of Europe. But Britishness is now in rapid decay. It is a misreading to see the shrillness of the Tory Europhobes as anything other than the beginning of nationalism's end-game. Its future is 'tyoping the Colour on tins of shortbread for tourists.

We are witnessing an epic moment in the war against racism in the stand of the Transport and General Workers Union against the employment practices of Ford Truckfleet. An official of the rival union claims that the extreme rarity of black lorry drivers "may simply be because their superior intelligence says don't work in a shitty job for low pay" (TUC to rule on Ford race row, December 15). To dispose of such cynical white-collar racism requires precisely that we do not grace its indelible national identity with any legitimacy whatsoever.

Tom Snow, London

THE article by Yasmin Alibhai-Brown highlights clandestine racism within employment practices and individuals' attitudes.

Racial discrimination has been historically rampant in highly paid jobs. I remember in 1986 when I was seeking a job as a print worker in Fleet Street. Their practices, then supported by the trade unions, were similar to those at Ford. Anxiety about its survival is a good sign.

Anin Mavani, London

YASMIN Alibhai-Brown throws away much of the force of her piece by arguing that anxieties about the corrosion of a British cultural identity need to be taken seriously. Racism and nationalism are first cousins. The one cannot be attacked by making concessions to the other. Britishness is the name of state

YASMIN Alibhai-Brown seems to be saying that now there are not enough low-grade jobs to go round and blacks are being kept out of those that there are by white competitors, black people with ability and money should try to join the middle classes.

She has done this herself by putting her son through a fee-paying school and at least trying to get him into Oxford. I wonder how this will go down with car workers suffering discrimination in Dagenham?

My own conclusion after 35 years of "race relations" research in Britain is that all that this will do is allow a few middle-class blacks to disassociate themselves from their fellows. I am, of course, sad for these black and Asian middle classes that they should suffer discrimination at the higher levels and that they should be personally hurt. Frankly, however, this bears no comparison with the situation of those denied jobs altogether. I cannot see how making acceptance easier for promoted blacks and Asians in professional jobs and the fee-paying educational sector will help.

(Prof) John Rex, University of Warwick, Coventry

WHILE Yasmin Alibhai-Brown's strictures on racist attitudes will ring true among those who share her concerns about the deleterious effect of such prejudices, the story of a Muslim woman facing hostility from her work colleagues over the wearing of a headscarf (Appeal against 'hijab' racism, December 15) does not augur well for positive change.

WR Jackson, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire

Selling death around the world

IS THERE nowhere that British arms cannot contribute towards death? The Middle East, South America, now Rwanda? Just how do those responsible live with their consciences and that includes members of governments who sit idly by?

(Dr) David Blot, University of Tasmania, Launceston, Australia

IF IT is so shocking to sell arms to Rwanda that we should declare it illegal, why is it acceptable to sell arms to Nigeria, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, to name only three repressive regimes? On December 8, you reported that a £200 million British overseas aid programme to Indonesia had been linked directly to multi-million-pound sales of arms and military aircraft.

Why does no one in Parliament speak out? Surely it could not be to protect the interests of UK firms? Rae Street, Littleborough, Lancashire

THE arms dealers who supplied the Rwandan regime before and during the 1994 genocide look like escaping their just deserts, thanks to registering on Mickey Mouse islands and the rumblings of free-market politicians suddenly concerned about the loss of jobs. Such difficulties could be surmounted by indicting them at the International Court of Justice as accessories to genocide. But I doubt very much that this will happen.

Colin Gill, London

It's still the economy, stupid

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and Nato troops remaining in Bosnia for another 18 months, with reviews every six months. He noted that the firm, one-year time limit for the length of the I-for mission had been a mistake — "the statements were far too positive as to when we'd get out".

"If the situation on the ground changes, we can quickly bring additional troops back to Bosnia," Gen Shalikashvili went on. "I am very confident that if military commanders report that the risk to their troops is such that more soldiers have to be brought in, I have no doubt that my government would agree."

Washington's armed forces are now increasingly ready to intervene in overseas crises when US national interests are only marginally concerned, in a world where the Nato alliance becomes the tool of choice for military action in the Middle East and Africa, Gen Shalikashvili added.

"This is no longer a world where you only limit yourself to vital interests," the Pentagon's top officer told a group of international correspondents in a year-end survey of the world. It was the clearest statement yet delivered of the new and complex strategic vision of the Clinton administration. In a broad survey of the US global role, which included a sharp warning over Chinese arms sales to Iran, the General revealed for the first time that he had recommended considering the use of Nato forces in Rwanda, and had discussed this with the United Nations secretary-general this summer.

TODAY, we protect our interests when they are threatened, in order to shape the environment to ensure that what develops is in accord with our goals: using American military forces in situations when lesser interests are threatened so they don't grow," he said. "When I was Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in Europe, I thought the day would come when the Nato horizon would stretch beyond Europe. I can envisage the day when the member nations see it useful to deal with humanitarian and other operations in Africa or the Middle East, utilising Nato command and control."

A world view of this scope suggests that we are close to the high water mark of American power and ambition. A similar crest may loom in the stock markets, and possibly in the political fortunes of the Clinton presidency. This may all be too gloomy in such a triumphant re-election year, but there is an uncomfortable sense that Clinton, the Pentagon, and even the US economy, may have nowhere to go but down. But his legacy, as the free-trade president and the man who appears to be crafting the new consensus on foreign and domestic policies for a generation to come, is already in place.

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The collapse of communism was supposed to bring wonderful capitalism. But it never happened, writes David Hearst in Moscow

How the East was won — and lost

FLYING east to arrive in the habitual gloom of a landing at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport, the British Airways flight from London was packed with wary travellers. It was December 1991, the last days of Mikhail Gorbachev and the Soviet Union. The Red Flag still flew over the Kremlin — but it only needed the merest of political events, a secret meeting between the presidents of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, for the symbol of the great empire's authority to come slithering down.

Sensing the moment, the plane-lead of Westerners was full of nervous anticipation. My neighbour was a Belgian businessman who boasted to his colleague that the banner that loomed large as the plane thumped its way towards the end of the runway was "theirs". They had bought the whole thing, or so they thought. Beside him was a German who was buying up Orders of Lenin or the Red Banner of Labour from cash-starved war veterans, and beside him was a man who called himself "a missionary from the Lord".

They were missionaries for no one but themselves. The democratic values they thought they were importing to Russia have been blown away, and the result is the sort of historic but fundamentally dangerous medieval feud.

Western embassies in Moscow, susceptible to the claim that things had not turned out under Boris Yeltsin quite the way they had intended, have erected a temporary wooden palisade around their rather exposed positions. It consists of three arguments. Argument Number One: After 75 years of communism in which Russia was practically a militarised state, it would be folly to expect the transition period to go smoothly or quickly. It took 300 years to create the English law. There's no arguing with that.

Defence Number Two: Right or wrong, democrat or not, there was no practical alternative to supporting Boris Yeltsin, who, whatever else he has done, has submitted himself twice to popular vote and

won fairly both times. Who else was there? Grigori Yavlinski, the young and popular liberal economist, but as yet nowhere near power. Government have to deal with heads of states. Bad Boris was the "least worst" choice.

Plea-bargain Number Three: Let us not overestimate the West's influence on internal Russian politics. It is here that the fence has a gaping hole in it. Over the past five years, Russia has opened the door on the West almost painfully wide. The Western governments had an unexpectedly large amount of day-to-day influence on the governance of Russia. They decided when to turn on the financial taps to prop up the state budget, when to keep quiet (the CIA is very well informed about the murky events around the storming of the Moscow White House, the seat of a parliamentary rebellion in 1993) and when to turn up in person at Yeltsin's sick bed and declare him fighting fit.

In late 1991 and early 1992, the enthusiasm of the plan-load of free-market missionaries was matched only by the idealism and naivety of their Russian hosts. Their belief in what the future held in store, how wealth would instantly and painlessly flow into Russia on a great tide of Western investment, was painful to witness.

I remember an old man staggering drunk up to the kiosk where I stopped to buy beer in a village outside Moscow. The sight of foreigners travelling freely outside Moscow was still new. Even the word "foreigner" in Russian had the same ponderous resonance that it had in Britain 40 years ago in the days when Bend Sinister was a fishing village and "wogs" were still deemed to start in Clogs.

The man was drunk, and the sight of a battered Volvo produced an exaggerated effect on him: "Marvellous, these English cars. You know we were told for so long how stupid your Queen was, and how clever our Central Committee was. But you know we were the fools all along." That was the mood of the times. Self-abasement, rejection of



Consigned to history... Lenin out, McDonald's in. But for the Russian economy, where's the beef?

Russia's past, even its Cyrillic script in favour of English-language advertisements. It is here that nationalism was born as a creed that would take over from communism.

This was a revolution, not a reform, and revolutionaries are sensitive to symbols. Moscow was littered with the icons of the new free-market messiah. Giant Coca-Cola cans were placed along Gorky Street, Moscow's main thoroughfare, which was renamed Tverskaya. All the names of the streets were changed, and for a time no one could tell where they were on the Metro.

The free market has arrived, but the belief that the West would help Russia has gone. With it has also died any faith that democratic values are the right ones for crisis-ridden Russia today. The former security chief, Alexander Lebed, describes himself as "half a democrat", and it can only be an outside chance that the strong hand that Russia's battered working classes are crying out for will be a fair and paternalistic one.

This cynicism is as much a reaction to Western policy as it is to continued industrial decline. It was the West which argued in the worst moments of the Yeltsin years that the ends justified the means, and it has been argued consistently.

Yes, the way Yeltsin dealt with a parliamentary revolt in October 1993 was clumsy and bloody, but it had to be done, for the greater good of keeping the assorted communists and fascists holed up in the building out of power. Yes, it is politically harmful virtually to exclude the middle ground of opinion from state television, in an effort to persuade the people that it's a choice between the Whites and the Reds, but everything is excused in the aim of keeping Gennady Zyuganov, leader of a broad alliance of communists and nationalists, out of power.

Yes, more people died in the Chechen conflict than at any time since the war in Afghanistan, but Russia is still allowed to become a member of the Council of Europe. The West protests about the tactics

used, but not too loudly. Yes, the collapse of the state and the loss of law and order is harmful, but it's just a stage that many early capitalist states go through. That argument was made by an American ambassador in Moscow. In the light of the efforts that the FBI has made to highlight the dangers of Russian international crime, it is an ironic one.

Political pluralism, the rule of law, the distribution of power, fair elections, an independent media or free access to nationwide television in an election period — all of these principles have been quietly forgotten in the cause of the Greater Good.

The prism through which Russians see the West and interpret its intentions has turned. It takes no great depth of imagination to see how the patriotically minded might interpret the expansion of Nato eastwards as a threat. During perestroika, Mikhail Gorbachev sold nuclear-arms reduction at home as an element of the "new political thinking" that was overtaking the old cold war partners.

Where is the "new political thinking" in Nato's expansion? Nato itself continues to be a military-led and US-dominated alliance. All Russian attempts to form a new European-based security structure have so far come to nothing. It is simply a non-starter, Russia is told.

The military tables have turned. It was once the West whose reliance on the nuclear shield was justified by the overwhelming number of Soviet tanks facing them. The same argument is now being used by Russia in reverse.

The missionaries have long since flown home. The quick bucks have been made, and what Russian industry needs is investors, not asset-strippers. It is clear that whoever becomes the next president of Russia, the basis for a non-democratic, authoritarian regime has already been laid.

The jury is out about how the next president of Russia will behave internationally. It was clearly not the West's intention to create an unstable Russia, playing the role in Europe of the dirty neighbour at the bottom of the garden who never cuts his grass. This is, after all, the post-Chernobyl age. But the question remains of the past five years of intense Western effort: did the West win the East or are we just about to lose it?

Vote on Crimean port splits neighbours

James Meek in Moscow

HOSTILITY between the two largest states in eastern Europe increased sharply this month when the upper house of the Russian parliament accused Ukraine of illegally occupying Russian territory.

In an unexpected move, senators in the normally docile Federation Council voted overwhelmingly in support of two motions effectively demanding that Kiev recognise Sevastopol, on the Crimean peninsula, as a Russian city.

Both Russia and the international community have recognised Sevastopol as being part of Ukraine since the state became independent five years ago. "Unilateral action by the Ukrainian side, aimed at seizing from Russia part of its territory, are not only illegal from the point of view of international law, but directly damage the security of Russia," said the council.

In a more sinister use of language, a second motion accused Ukraine of creating tension in the former Soviet Union by refusing to return Sevastopol.

The city is the main base for the former Soviet Black Sea fleet, which Moscow and Kiev have been trying to share out since the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. But in recent months the focus of dispute has shifted to the status of the city itself.

The lower house of the Russian parliament, the Duma, has often made declarations on the Russian status of Sevastopol, which President Boris Yeltsin has promptly vetoed. But this is the first time that the upper house — previously a sleepy club of Yeltsin yes-men that could be relied upon not to rock the boat — has dinned such aggressively patriotic colours.

President Yeltsin can and will veto the council. But it makes both

him and the foreign ministry more isolated in their efforts to reach a compromise with Ukraine, a deal which the indignant Ukrainian parliament is becoming increasingly less willing to make.

The council, made up of the heads of Russia's 89 regions, has been energised in past months by a series of gubernatorial elections. New governors, such as Mr Yeltsin's old foe Alexander Rutskoi, are keen to flex their muscles, while old governors are desperate to show the electorate that they are more than just the Kremlin's vote-grabbers and subsidy-farmers.

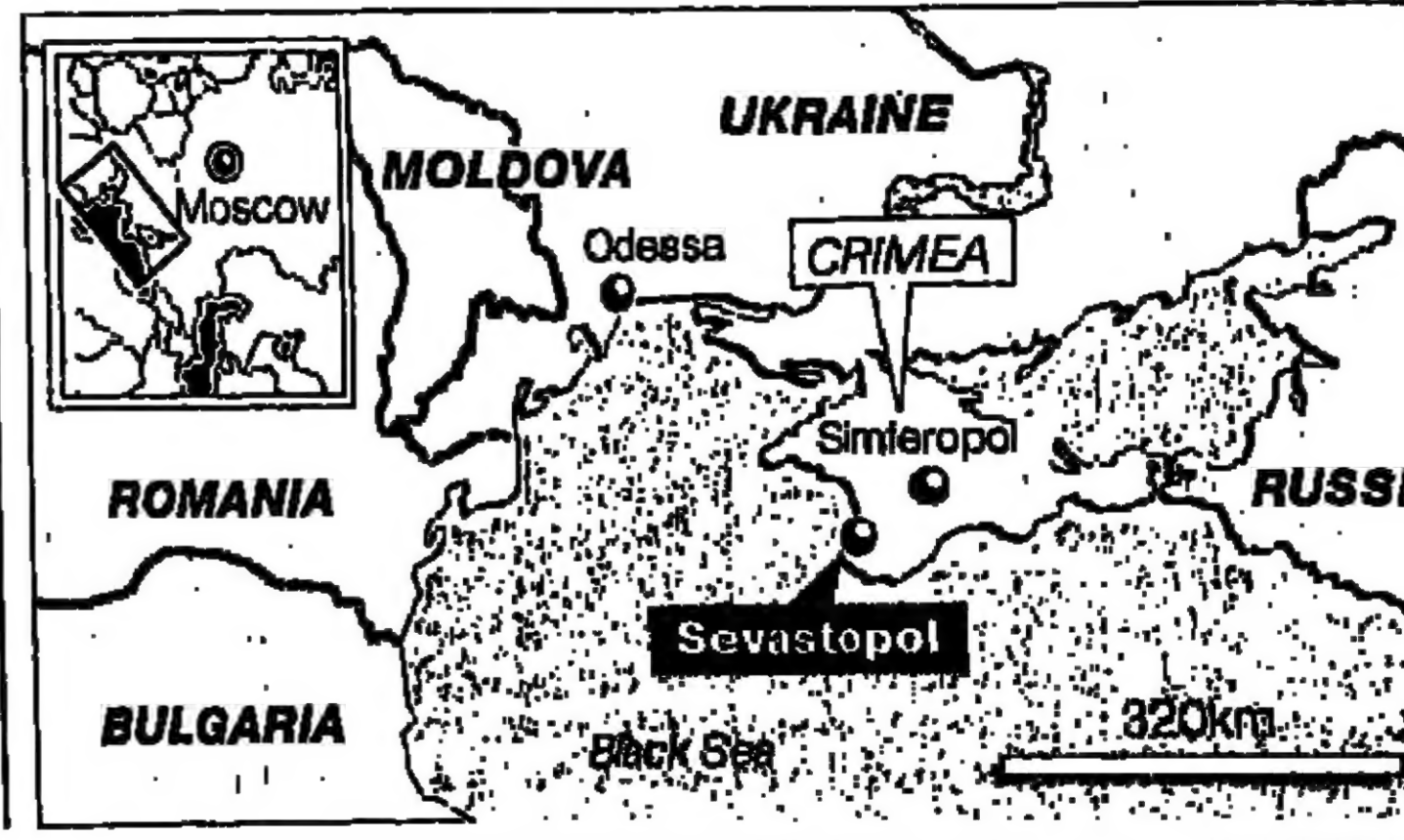
The Sevastopol vote was prompted by the ambitious mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov, whose campaign to repatriate the Crimean city is seen as part of his strategy to become president in 2000.

Mr Luzhkov argues that Nikita Khrushchev's 1954 "gift" of Crimea from Russia to Ukraine — both then

part of the Soviet Union — did not include Sevastopol, which was administered separately by Moscow. But the Russian Federation has since signed separate agreements with Kiev recognising Ukraine's new borders. Kiev insists that Russian recognition of a Ukrainian Sevastopol was one of the conditions under which it gave up its nuclear weapons.

Talks on a friendship treaty between the two governments have foundered because of the city, which is seen as the key to control of Crimea.

Had Ukraine not inherited the overwhelmingly Russian-speaking city it would scarcely have occurred to Kiev to ask for it. But now that it has it, the government feels it would be too humiliating to give it back.



China picks a friendly tycoon

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong profiles the man Beijing has put in charge of the former British colony



Tung: bailed out by Beijing

SOON after arriving in Hong Kong in 1983, the man appointed by Deng Xiaoping as China's plenipotentiary in the colony made a less than dazzling discovery. "I began to realise that the political inclinations of businessmen are usually linked to their business. They lean towards whoever supports them in trade or finance," recalls Xu Jiatun, China's senior official here until 1990. "I suggested that we use our resources to foster a group of pro-China capitalists."

The theory was quickly put into practice. In 1985, China stepped in with \$120 million to help bail out the shipping empire of a Hong Kong family previously far more partial, at least in public, to Taiwan and Princess Grace of Monaco than the cadres of the Chinese Communist Party.

This month, 11 years after Beijing helped set up the world's third biggest corporate bailout (after Chrysler and Lockheed), the businessman saved from bankruptcy has been named as Chris Patten's successor, the first post-colonial chief executive of Hong Kong.

Tung Chee-hwa, or CH as he is often called, is aged 59, a fan of Confucius who sends his children to university in America, a Chinese patriot who left China, a man whose given name means "build China" but who used to cheer on Liverpool Football Club.

"He owes China a big favour, but so do many businessmen," said David Chu, a property millionaire who met Mr Tung when they worked together at a General Electric plant near Boston in 1968. He sees Mr Tung's intimate connection with China as an asset not a handicap. "He knows how to communi-

cate with Chinese leaders. They have a different set of values. Almost like alien beings."

In the weeks preceding his confirmation by a carefully screened 400-member selection committee, Mr Tung has spoken Beijing's language. He emerged from relative obscurity to toe China's line with a consistency and vigour that has alarmed critics and surprised even some veteran pro-China politicians.

He told the democrats that they must change, warned Tibet support groups to pack their bags, echoed Chinese conspiracy theories about "hostile foreign forces", and declined to join those demanding leniency for the Hong Kong journalist Xi Yang, who was jailed for 12 years in China for an interest-rate scoop.

"He is going to do what he is told. He is going to be very tough and he will obey orders," said Emily Lau, a democratically elected member of the legislative council. "The things he has been saying in the past few weeks show us that he is through and through a Communist cadre."

Most of Hong Kong prefers to see a classic conservative, a view Mr Tung has encouraged by paying homage to Confucius at a Hong Kong temple and praising traditional values in an 18-page "election" manifesto. An official who knows him suggests that he wants

to be "a Hong Kong Lee Kuan-yew" — Singapore's stern, paternalistic elder statesman.

But Mr Tung also has considerable charm and modesty. He waits in the queue at immigration, even in Beijing, and uses a BMW in a city with more Rolls Royces per capita than any other — though the car does carry the less than proletarian badge of the Corps Consulaire, an emblem of his role as honorary consul for Monaco.

Despite his years in Liverpool — he's a graduate in marine engineering from the university San Francisco, Boston and the hybrid East-West city of Hong Kong, he champions the values of the country he left at the age of 12, when his father, C Y Tung, the founder of the family shipping fortune, fled Shanghai for Hong Kong just before Mao Zedong's revolution.

"The Americans attach a great deal of importance to their rights," he said recently. "I am not saying that they are wrong but I think, for us Chinese, obligations are more important." Such comments alarm democrats. Beijing, with its investment of trust and, in the past, money, is delighted.

"He is the type that appeals most to Chinese officials. He is very cautious. He is very careful about political correctness," said Tsang Yok-sing, leader of the Beijing-backed Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong.

But are these the talents needed

to preserve the "high degree of autonomy" promised to Hong Kong after July 1 under the formula of "one country, two systems"?

Mr Tung's only experience in government was a four-year stint on Mr Patten's executive council, where he opposed political and most other reforms. Some even challenge his reputation in business, questioning a carefully constructed orthodoxy that he rescued the family shipping empire from his father's excesses.

But it was the near-collapse of the firm, with more than \$2.5 billion of debt in September 1985, that helped launch Mr Tung's political career. It brought him into the orbit — and trust — of Beijing business interests and officials.

China's role in the bailout was not formally acknowledged by Mr Tung until two months ago, a reference attributed to the family's ties to Taiwan. The subject remains sensitive and rarely elicits more than brief answers.

Bankers involved in the rescue plan, which took nearly two years to put together, praise Mr Tung's powers of persuasion and tenacity. But the secrecy surrounding it remains a cause for concern.

"Why would the Communists lend so much money to the Tung family?" asked Ms Lau. "What is between them. I don't think we will ever know. But that is a clear signal they know the family very well and trust them."

Anthony Hubbard in Wellington on the parties that have joined forces to govern New Zealand

Old political foes make strange bedfellows

NEW ZEALAND has a new electoral system and a new government headed by two bitter foes. Elections under the new German-style proportional representation system have forced the conservative prime minister, Jim Bolger, to team up with his old enemy, the arch-populist Winston Peters.

This month the two men smiled for the cameras and signed a coalition agreement — a political peace treaty ending years of mutual re-remembrance. Mr Peters, sacked from Mr Bolger's National cabinet in 1991, now returns as deputy prime minister and treasurer, a senior finance portfolio created especially for him. This completes an electoral revolution in New Zealand, where 12 years of radical Thatcherism have also brought economic and social upheaval.

In October, the country's first election under the new mixed member proportional (MMP) system left both the incumbent National and opposition Labour parties well short of a parliamentary majority. Neither side could form a government without the support of the 17 MPs of New Zealand First, the odd electoral force that Mr Peters founded in 1993.

Mr Bolger and the Labour leader, Helen Clark, were both forced to woo Mr Peters — a courteship that was long and extraordinarily complex. Finally, after eight weeks of secret talks, the kingmaker opted for National, a party whose rightwing economic and social policy he had condemned for many years.

The coalition agreement increases social spending, especially on health and education. But it makes only minor changes to economic policy — and has provoked

cries of treachery from Mr Peters' supporters and critics alike. The coalition agreement was a catalogue of betrayal, says Ms Clark, who fought an effective campaign but managed to capture only 28 per cent of the vote.

The critics are now throwing back at Mr Peters some of the virulently anti-National rhetoric that he hurled during the election campaign. In August, for instance, he said: "The prime minister is not fit for the job, and come October he will be out." In his campaign opening in September, he said: "If you want National out, vote New Zealand First."

Asked to explain, Mr Peters says he chose the party which would best deliver his party's policies. He also puts some of the blame on Jim Anderson's Alliance, a leftwing party which broke away from Labour and won 10 per cent of the vote. A New Zealand-First Labour coalition would have needed support from the Alliance to get its legislation through — and Mr Peters has always believed that the Alliance was not a reliable partner.

Mr Peters's job as treasurer puts him above the finance minister, Bill Birch, a dour rightwinger who is a close friend of Mr Bolger. Mr Peters will now be in charge of the budget. But while he is in the engine room, the machinery remains largely the same and the free-market direction unchanged. The Reserve Bank Act, which required the governor Don Brash to hold inflation between 0 and 2 per cent, has been relaxed a little — he may now go to 3 per cent.

The other pillar of the monetarist regime — the Employment Contracts Act, a successful mechanism



Sparring partners... Winston Peters (left) and Jim Bolger seal their coalition deal

to break the power of the unions — will be softened a little, but not much. The basic free-market thrust of policy remains untouched, despite Mr Peters's endless denunciation of it. Under the coalition agreement, New Zealand First also wins five of the 20 cabinet posts.

The coalition agreement includes some victories for Mr Peters. Social spending will increase by some NZ\$5 billion over the three-year parliamentary term. A substantial increase in health spending might help to retrieve some of his popularity. National's far-reaching health reforms — which subjected hospitals to competition for funding and required them to make a profit — have proved deeply unpopular and were a major election issue. Peters can take the credit for forcing

National to increase spending and to scrap the profit requirement.

Mr Peters largely lost his campaign to "cut immigration to the bone". He has run a controversial anti-immigration campaign, and critics accuse him of pandering to anti-Asian prejudice. But under the coalition pact immigration levels will continue at current levels.

But Mr Peters has forced the National Party to abandon the hated superannuation surcharge, a tax on wealthier pensioners. National promised at the 1990 election to scrap the surtax, but when it defeated the Labour government it broke its promise.

David Lange's Labour party broke a promise not to impose a surtax when it came to power in 1984 and began the free-market revolution.

Betrayal and broken promises have been the hot currency of political debate in New Zealand for 12 years. They forced a radical re-orientation of forces, as the Alliance broke away from Labour, and New Zealand First broke from National. Both accused the older party of treachery.

Disillusionment is also rife among Maori voters, who this year abandoned their 50-year-old support of Labour and massively backed New Zealand First. Mr Peters's decision to join National will be especially unpopular with Maori people. Some now predict that the five Maori MPs in his caucus will eventually split from the party. Mr Peters faces a huge challenge in winning over angry Maori voters. But he thrives on crisis and he has come back from political near-death many times before.

The move to MMP was an attempt by a disillusioned electorate to bring the politicians to account. Now some are arguing that Mr Peters's policy about-face suggests that MMP is no better than the old system. The long delay in forming a government has also bred some disillusionment.

Mr Lange, a critic of MMP, has excoriated Mr Peters and his protracted courtship by Labour and National. He said the two big parties had allowed New Zealand First to be "the tail that wagged the entire animal".

Coalition-building is a new experience for New Zealand, former home of a streamlined Westminster system where first-past-the-post governments wielded overwhelming power with less than 50 per cent of the vote. Even with an unitary system, however, none of the pundits thought the process would take so long.

But these may be merely teething troubles. Coalition-building at the next election, due to be held in 1999, should go more quickly. If only because Mr Peters's preferred partner will be obvious to all: his old friend and foe, Jim Bolger.

Seven months ago **Matthew Engel** paid his first visit to Israel and found it heading towards grudging acceptance of a state of Palestine. But on his return he finds a country split in two, extreme orthodoxy on the march, and fears growing of a new Middle East war

Hatred disfigures Promised Land

IT IS Monday morning, the time when 13-year-old Jewish boys come to the Walling Wall in Jerusalem for their bar mitzvah. The scene is probably more bewildering to anyone whose experience of these rituals has been confined to synagogues in London or Manchester than it is to a complete outsider. In Britain the bar mitzvah boy reads out his portion of the Torah in a nervous gabble amid a decorous hush. Here, at Judaism's most solemn and sacred place, there were a dozen competing ceremonies a few feet from each other.

The boys' thin voices never stood a chance. Their male relatives were alongside them chanting far louder and more confidently. And their mums and aunts — barred from the temple confines — were leaning over the fence, singing, cheering, throwing coins. From a distance the sounds merged into a general ululation, like an African funeral. Close to, the scene was more like a football match: joyous, fervent, irrational.

Twenty-four hours later, another group appeared. These were the Women of the Wall, who — far more quietly — exercised what they believed was their right to worship. They did not attempt to penetrate the men's section, which would have been an obvious provocation. However, a number were reportedly wearing kipot and tallitot — skull-caps and prayer-shawls — which are normally only worn by men.

They were ambushed by a group of Orthodox Jews who hurled chairs at them. The police ignored the attackers and threw the women out. "You can't pray like that," said one policeman. Later, a government minister told the women they were crazy and said, if they wanted equality, they could go to the beach or the disco.

Welcome to the New New Middle East. This is not the New Middle East promised by Shimon Peres before the Israeli election last May. Peres envisaged an Israel living in peace alongside an independent Palestine. This was specifically, if narrowly, rejected by the electorate. They chose Binyamin Netanyahu as prime minister instead.

For months Netanyahu has been saying that he is on the brink of achieving what might be regarded as his first success: an agreement for a partial withdrawal of Israeli troops from Hebron. This is a city where the normal difficulties of Middle Eastern politics are complicated by the presence of a few hundred militantly anti-Arab Jewish settlers in the heart of the city — among the people Israel conquered in 1967 and whose fathers and grandfathers massacred Hebron's original Jewish community in 1929.

But for many of Netanyahu's supporters this would not be a triumph but a betrayal. And in terms of his own mandate, it is not another step on the way to an independent Palestine, as it was meant to be, but a piece of unfinished business on which he could not renegé. Assuming the withdrawal happens at all, it is not obvious when or, even if, the next step towards peace might come.

More than 12 months have passed since the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, and seven months since the vote that brought Netanyahu to power. When I paid my first visit here just before the election, the road seemed open to a future of prosperity and, if not brotherly love, then at least a grudging co-existence between Israel and the incipient state of Palestine.

Now the landscape is transformed utterly. Israel's new rulers were elected to abort the idea of Palestine and to construct a different vision for their own state.

The nations of the world are united in their distaste for the new government. There are endless stories of the prime minister's technical incompetence and crassness, like his meeting with the head of the World Bank, who was obliged to listen to an hour-long economics lesson. Last month the Jerusalem Post, the new government's most reliable cheerleader, ran a major piece describing the appalling relationships between the prime minister and the military establishment and claiming that he no longer had any adviser who could give him accurate information about Arab thinking. As for his character, the most telling detail may be that after the election Netanyahu insisted he should no longer be known by his nickname of "Bibi", used by family, friend and foe since he was a baby. He thought it undignified. This was not the action of a man comfortable in himself.

Israel's enemies have always found it easy to make unjust comparisons with the old South Africa. But it gets easier when you read that the government is preparing plans to corral Israeli Arabs in the Galilee into blocks of flats to prevent them having a majority of the land; when you understand the reality that Orthodox groups, backed by American money, are buying Arabs out of the Muslim Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem in a systematic attempt to Judaise the area; when you witness the casual contempt with which Orthodox Jews in Jerusalem deal with Palestinians; and when you hear that, as in Britain, the government has lately reversed the gun laws. This one, however, has been making it easier to carry one.



Voice of hate: rightwing fanatics heckle a Peace Now demonstration in Tel Aviv

Judaism; this is barbarism. The government does not formally condone the veneration of Goldstein, any more than it condones the powerful undercurrent of sympathy for Yigal Amir, the fanatic who murdered Rabin. But the tone of the administration is one of lingering hate.

While Israeli negotiators were talking to Yasser Arafat's officials and trying to put together a deal on Hebron, the prime minister's policy director and — some say — his *lumineuse grise*. He is an urbane and pleasant individual. What he says is extraordinary. Had Netanyahu, I wondered, learned anything from his time of office, particularly from the débacle over the opening of the temple tunnel in September, when rioting led to 75 deaths? "Yes," said Bar-Ilan. "He's learned you can't trust the word of the Palestinian Authority. Before we worried about the violence from Hamas, now we are worried about the Palestinian police."

"We expect Arafat to try it again. He doesn't like having to worry about book-keeping and garbage and that sort of thing. He loves tumult and turmoil and he thrives on it. One of the greatest crimes against Palestinians was getting him and his gangsters back from exile instead of democratising Palestinian society."

This does not sound like an administration serious about the possibility of peaceful co-existence. What is so astonishing is that, 49 years after the state's foundation, Israeli leaders are still unable to empathise with Palestinian resentments or to understand why Arafat has been such a successful articulator of them. Judaism is based on endurance and tradition and symbolism, not on rationality. Yet Israel expects the Palestinians to behave rationally, without regard to their own symbols or what is left of their dignity.

This incomprehension within the government is matched by the despair and bafflement of the defeated forces within Israel about their own

failure. Peres's Labour Party — and this may be unique in the democratic world — represents an alliance between the business and the intellectual communities. A member of the Tel Aviv middle classes could spend years without meeting socially anyone who voted for Netanyahu's Likud.

The most coherent psephological explanation lies in the huge group of recent Russian immigrants, who voted for Rabin in 1992 and switched sides, partly in response to the bus bombings in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem which unhinged the promise of peace, and partly because their leader, Natan Sharansky, allied himself with Netanyahu.

two to one for Netanyahu over Peres. But they still may not get quite what they bargained for. When they see a foreign journalist, opposition politicians seem inclined to reject the most damning interpretations of Israel's situation. As one put it to me: "Bibi's a stupid idiot, but he's still our stupid idiot."

Most believe that if the worst did come to the worst the country would rally round as it always has done and that everyone would obey orders. But they also believe the worst will not come to the worst and that the Bar-Ilan view may not, in the end, prevail. "I think Bibi really believes you can't trust those Arabs," said Uri Dromi, who was chief spokesman for the Rabin and Peres administrations. "But I also think he's trying to buy time. Buy time till what? Till the Arabs change and become someone else? Even if the government doesn't want peace, they can't go back."

"I think the peace process will continue," says Michael Keren, professor of political science at Tel Aviv University, "because Netanyahu is the product of the modern, democratic Israel. All the pressure — from the White House, business, the military, the technocrats, the media — is towards peace. I don't think he will be able to escape his destiny."

It will be a familiar sort of irony if one day Netanyahu joins his Likud predecessor, Menachem Begin, and Arafat himself on the list of unlikely winners of the Nobel Peace Prize. For the moment we have to content ourselves with the irony that a government elected to talk tough to the Arabs has found itself so globally reviled that its negotiating position has been immeasurably weakened. It is Netanyahu who needs the Hebron deal most urgently to prevent his government's international credibility disappearing completely. It is Arafat who suddenly and improbably seems the reasonable man.

The hope is that Keren is right and that Israel and Palestine's joint destiny has been postponed, not dancelled. The alternative is still too horrible to contemplate.

French racists win over workers

Alex Duval Smith in Paris

AFTER working his way up to the rank of senior prison officer, Damien Francis, aged 49, says he is proud never to have betrayed his working-class roots.

For the first 26 years of his career, he was an activist in the communist-dominated CGT trade union confederation. Then, a few months ago, he founded FN-Pénitentiaire — the National Front prisons union.

Across France, lifelong left-leaning men such as Mr Francis are taking similar steps. With a missionary zeal fired by anger at the posturing and sleaze of mainstream politics, police officers, transport and defence workers are securing grassroots bases for the extremist National Front.

But Mr Francis and those like him are not policy men. And while they admire the sobriety of Jean-Marie Le Pen, some are appalled by the thought of racism. Nevertheless, they want to consolidate the position of the immigrants out party, whose leader gained 15 per cent of the vote in the first round of last year's presidential election.

Mr Francis said: "I voted Le Pen at the European, municipal and presidential elections. But before, in Mitterrand's day, I voted Socialist."

"I do not consider myself racist but the unions have let us down and Le Pen speaks sense where other politicians give us platitudes. The National Front's ideas correspond with mine — respect for discipline, patriotic values and the eminent social role of our profession."

Since Mr Francis registered FN-Pénitentiaire in September, he has recruited 45 of the 123 prison officers at Villeneuve-lès-Maguelonne jail, near Montpellier. Five other jails have created branches of the union.

Mr Francis, who claims the main trade unions have lost touch with their members, was inspired by the Front National Police, created a year ago. In workers' council elections last December, one in seven policemen voted for the FNP, giving it fourth position among 18 police unions and a voice on appointments boards. FNP's members are secretive and the only measure of the union's support is the claimed 10,000 circulation of its journal, *Policier Français*.

Alain Brillet, president of the Fédération Nationale Autonome de Police (FNAIP), said: "For now the FNP is keeping a low profile. It just campaigns on two issues: restoring the death penalty and attempting to win the right for police to open fire even when not threatened."

But he said the FNP's presence could lead to explosive situations. "Among a riot police squad at Jarville, near Metz, 42.7 per cent of officers voted for the FNP last December. These people work on housing estates where there is much racial tension. In such a situation, there is a potential for a gang mentality among FNP supporters."

The emergence of National Front unions is in keeping with the party's policy of "going out on to the streets" — a populist approach contrasting with the Paris-centred activi-

ties of the main parties, including the Communists.

In October, the National Front's deputy leader, Bruno Mégret, launched a "campaign against globalisation" by leafleting striking workers at a Moulinex factory in Normandy. Activists attend all demonstrations against the big cuts in France's defence industries. And the party has created transport workers' unions in Lyon and Paris.

The party has tried to gain a foothold among teachers, by founding the *Mouvement pour une Éducation Nationale* (MEN), which has the same initials as the education ministry. But interest has been scant: less than 2 per cent of teachers voted for Le Pen in the presidential elections.

However, the party appears to be making inroads in traditionally unpollitised areas; among college students and parents, and in seeking seats on housing association councils. Politicising the unpolitical is a tactic that has worked among French animal rights groups — which have a strong National Front base supported by Brigitte Bardot — and among traditionalist Roman Catholics.

Pascal Perrineau, a sociologist at the Centre d'Études de la Vie Politique Française, said: "The National Front's ideas are definitely progressive, but in a patchy way and mostly among people with few other political reflexes than protest and anger. There is widely felt distaste about corruption in the main four parties and, in that context, Le Pen appears clean."

What was being billed a few years ago as the east German success story has turned sour. Seven years after the Berlin Wall fell — and after a colossal 1,000 billion Deutschmarks have been pumped into the east — its economic growth will be lower than western levels for the first time next year.

The transfers have not been able to put the east German economy on a self-sustaining growth path, says Thomas Mayer, chief economist at Goldman Sachs in Frankfurt. "They've been used mainly to fund consumption and to kickstart the construction sector, which is now falling."

Berlin itself is broke. Stripped of the subsidies that kept it going as the showcase window on the West through the cold war, the city staggers from one budget crisis to the next, with alienation between its eastern and western sections all-pervasive.

From the rusting shipyards of the Baltic coast to the industrial wastelands of the southeast, the picture is grim. And people are gloomy. Franz Schuster, economics minister of the eastern state of Thuringia, verges on panic as he describes the crises and problems piling on his desk. "The economic recovery has stopped here," he says. "We're stuck in a downward spiral that means 25 per cent of our firms could be threatened with closure over the next year."

Real, as opposed to official, unemployment means that one in four east Germans will be out of work next year, according to a report in October by a panel of economic advisers to the government.

This is not the way things were supposed to be. The pan-German script penned by Chancellor Kohl in 1990 infamously looked forward to "flourishing landscapes" in east Germany within five years, suggesting



arbeitslos
The optimism of unification in 1990 has soured for many east Germans, with one in four facing unemployment. PHOTO: THOMAS HENSE

Bitterness as Germans fail to bridge east-west divide

Ian Traynor in Bonn

EAST GERMANS see themselves as losers in the lottery of unification. For most of the 17 million people in the five east German states, the euphoria of the turn of the decade which filled the skies over Berlin and Leipzig with cries of "We are one people, one country" has evaporated.

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This is not the way things were supposed to be. The pan-German script penned by Chancellor Kohl in 1990 infamously looked forward to "flourishing landscapes" in east Germany within five years, suggesting

that a few years of hard graft would seamlessly knit the two parts of the country together.

The subsidies and investment would trigger an east German boom, which in turn would lead to west German growth. Instead, politicians and analysts now admit it will take at least a generation — perhaps 70 years — for standards of living to become level. If they ever do.

"You can no longer speak of an economic equalisation, but of a widening discrepancy between east and west," says Wolfgang Thierse, deputy chairman of the opposition Social Democrats, and himself an east German.

This is not just the opposition berating Mr Kohl. The chancellor's conservative supporters at the influential *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* talked wilfully last month of Germany's economic unification being the "most expensive disaster since the war".

Meanwhile west Germans are increasingly resentful paying a 7.5 per cent tax surcharge to fund the east, and view easterners as whingers and subsidy junkies. The tax is called the "solidarity surcharge", increasingly, this is a misnomer.

For their part, east Germans have been patronised by the westerners, whom they view as interlopers and carpetbaggers who have hijacked their country and culture. Politically and diplomatically, German unification was an undiluted triumph for Mr Kohl.

But however formidable his talents as a politician, Mr Kohl's strong suit is not economics. His one-to-one fusion of the two German currencies in 1990, over the heads of Bundesbank opposition, was a political imperative and a huge economic liability.

Six years on, the result is that eastern Germany is probably the most expensive manufacturing venue in the world, lagging well behind its post-communist Polish and Czech neighbours in growth and optimism.

"West German unit labour costs already top the league table of industrialised countries and in the east the unit labour costs are 30-50 points higher because of the productivity gap," says Mr Mayer. "That means nobody invests in the east to make profits, but to get subsidies."

Architect of choice for capital projects

Sir Norman Foster won the competition to build a new pedestrian bridge for London. Who's surprised? He wins them all, writes Dan Gjalster

AND the winner is... For architects and followers of architectural news there is little suspense to be had at the announcement of competition winners. The envelope is passed, a hush descends, and surprise, surprise, the name Sir Norman Foster is breathed into a microphone. This familiar plot was played out earlier this month when Sir Norman was revealed as the winner of the competition to design a £10 million pedestrian bridge across the Thames near St Paul's Cathedral.

This is the same Sir Norman Foster who in November won a £250,000 competition to revitalise the centre of London. Back in June he announced a £160 million plan to redevelop Wembley Stadium. Shortly afterwards, his plans for a giant, £200 million motorway and viaduct linking south-west France and Spain at the Tarn Gorge were



Foster: everyone's favourite

unveiled, and in mid-September he found time to announce plans for a £550 million, 1,265-foot tower in the City of London, aka "Foster's phallus".

Plans, plans, plans. Casual observers of stories about buildings could be forgiven for thinking that there is only one *britisher architect* of any note, or at a push two. The great British architecture double act is Richard Rogers and Sir Norman Foster. Can you tell them apart (aside from one being grumpy and the other charm personified)? Could you identify one of their buildings — excluding the unbuilt phallus — at 500 paces? Probably not, but the pair nevertheless exercise a firm grip on British architecture.

Now, with the latest string of victories, and particularly in beating Lord Rogers in the competition to revitalise central London, Sir Norman is pulling ahead. (Rogers, after sending a march on his early friend with the Pompidou Centre, now has to make do with the comparative wooden spoons of the Millennium Wheel and the Greenwich dome housing the Millennium exhibition, should it go ahead.)

This, we are told, is a golden age for British architecture. The wonder

that is the National Lottery has, whatever its faults, released a mass of funds for capital projects. The Tories, in setting up the National Lottery, knew who their friends were. The construction industry, as all Tory grandees know, must be kept happy. From buildings shall the trickle-down economic miracle flow.

Part of the explanation for Sir Norman's success is that he has the track record and the clout to get things done. His imposing office overlooking the Thames at Battersea exudes power and confidence. And it is an impressive record. He made his breakthrough in the mid-eighties with the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, the feng shui skyscraper shooting daggers at the bank's rivals. Stained airport is his best-known British building to date.

He is currently involved in the Chek Lap Kok airport in Hong Kong, the Reichstag in Berlin, the Millennium Tower in Tokyo — the world's highest at 2,500 feet — and another, comparatively small skyscraper in Frankfurt. Skyscrapers in Seoul and Riyadh also beckon, as does the British Museum, which, that institution's shaky finances permitting, he is due to remodel.

The consulting engineers for Sir Norman's Thames bridge proposal are Ove Arup & Partners. Sir Norman has the contacts and the muscle to get things done. Other designers such as Zaha Hadid may produce more startling designs, so seems to run the thinking on competition juries, but if you want to make sure your dreams turn into bricks and mortar, choose Normy.

With six offices worldwide, Sir Norman can oversee all this work, and enjoy the playboy hobby of piloting his private jet, perhaps stopping off somewhere for a spot of skiing, or whatever fashionable pastime has taken his fancy. Last year his salary more than doubled, from £205,000 to £457,000. His company, Foster Holdings Ltd, in which he has an 80 per cent stake, showed a 21 per cent jump in profits to £1.2 million in the year ended April 1995. Three-quarters of the company's turnover in that period came from the Far East and continental Europe. But with the help of the newly unleashed public enthusiasm for construction projects in this country, that is changing. Sir Norman's profile in Britain is rising fast.

With the turnover comes the lifestyle. Sir Norman's first wife, the great British architecture double act is Richard Rogers and Sir Norman Foster. Can you tell them apart (aside from one being grumpy and the other charm personified)? Could you identify one of their buildings — excluding the unbuilt phallus — at 500 paces? Probably not, but the pair nevertheless exercise a firm grip on British architecture.

With the turnover comes the lifestyle. Sir Norman's first wife, the architect Wendy Cheesman — with whom he had four sons — died of cancer in 1989. In 1990 he married Begum Sabiha Rumi Malik, who was to gain notoriety for suing UK customs for "slander by conduct" after being searched with her daughter at Heathrow. She lost the case, and the prosecuting counsel made the papers with his description of her as an "insufferable snob".

Now, with the latest string of victories, and particularly in beating Lord Rogers in the competition to revitalise central London, Sir Norman is pulling ahead. (Rogers, after sending a march on his early friend with the Pompidou Centre, now has to make do with the comparative wooden spoons of the Millennium Wheel and the Greenwich dome housing the Millennium exhibition, should it go ahead.)

This, we are told, is a golden age for British architecture. The wonder



THE artist's impression (above) shows how the new £10 million pedestrian bridge across the Thames will look when the project is completed, writes Dan Gjalster. The organisers hope that the construction, which will run from below St Paul's Cathedral

on the north bank to the Bankside power station, the site of the new Tate Gallery of Modern Art — the first to be built across the Thames in more than a century — will be finished in time for the opening of the Bankside gallery in spring 2000.

sexologist, and a respectable presence as a Cambridge academic.

It's not bad for a working-class boy of humble origins. Now 61, Sir Norman was a council worker and national serviceman before leaving for the United States in 1962 to study under Sir James Stirling. There he met Richard Rogers, returning to Britain to form Team 4, comprising the two men and their wives. The experiment didn't last, and Foster set up his own practice in 1967. He has an eye for dates. If 1967 represented the high point of an early enterprise culture, more than 20 years later he received his knighthood at the height of another. It was just in time. In 1990, the same year as he received his knighthood, the property boom nosedived.

But are his buildings any good? Part of the answer is to be found by asking other architects. This is instructive. Sir Norman is considered an architect's architect, even down to his renowned abrasiveness. His fellow professionals praise his clean designs, the quality of his drawing, the thoroughness of his work, the

attention to detail, the after-sales service. Above all, they say, he satisfies the client.

And what do the clients think? Part of the answer is to be found by asking the people who live and work in his buildings. Reactions are mixed. He finishes on time and on budget. But his recent design for the new law faculty at Cambridge university, opened by the Queen, has come in for criticism from students and dons. Their complaint was that the open-plan design captures not only the light, but the noise as well. "It is a typical example of architects designing for themselves and not for the people who use their buildings," says one don. Sir Norman's office apparently argued that sound levels were subjective. A team of independent consultants was called in.

Whatever the merits of his designs, we are sure to see more of him. Sir Norman, despite Lord Rogers's wheel and donnie, is the man bent on designing the next millennium for Britain. It is a potent ambition.

Risks grow for London homeless

James Melke

LIFE expectancy for those living on the streets of London has dropped to an average age of 42, from 47 four years ago, according to the homelessness charity, Crisis. A third are dying from natural causes such as heart conditions, but suicide, drug abuse and pneumonia are also common causes of death, according to records of coroners' courts in the capital.

The figure of 74 fatalities last year was only slightly down on the 86 in 1992, despite indications that the number of people sleeping rough may have dropped by two-thirds over the same period.

This indicates how much work may remain to tackle the remaining "hard core" of those on the streets, despite a £180 million government programme over the past six years. Crisis believes the figures underestimate the number of deaths because not all are referred to a coroner. The true total may be nearer 150.

An annual one-night street count of people sleeping rough in central London this year recorded 375, but the total number who are on the streets at least once in a year may be as high as 2,500, according to Crisis. It says there are rising numbers of young people on the streets.

Its report, published to coincide with the opening of its winter shelter network, said the average age of a rough sleeper dying from natural causes in London was 46, and that street dwellers were 35 times more likely to commit suicide, and four times more likely to die from unnatural causes such as accidents, assaults, murder and drug or alcohol poisoning. The death rate of the homeless compares with a national average life expectancy of 76.

Mark Scothern, the chief executive of Crisis, said: "Someone dies on the streets of London every five days. They die well before their time, in discomfort and without dignity."

The government programme had "lacked those who are relatively easy to help and, thank God, it has been able to do so" but help could not come quickly enough for others, on whom painstakingly long-term work is needed, he said.

It was often very difficult to integrate someone back into the mainstream of society after only three weeks' homelessness because they had adapted to their situation.

Simon Ramsden, a GP at Great Chapel Street practice, in Soho, central London, where one patient dies about every 10 days, said: "Being homeless is a violent, dodgy existence. Every couple of months I would expect to see someone who has been severely injured by someone attacking them."

"There is a trend to see homeless people as an easy target for a bit of huggery, with people taking a sadistic pleasure in torturing someone when they are at their most vulnerable, in a sleeping bag, when they can't just run off."

A spokesman for the Department of the Environment said: "We question the statistics but one premature death is one too many."

Still Dying for a Home; Crisis, Challenger House, 42 Adler Street, London E1 1EE; CB

Belgium's wealthy north shuns south

Stephen Bates in Brussels

THE most common car sticker in Brussels displays the red, gold and black national flag and announces defiantly: "United Belgians We Will Remain."

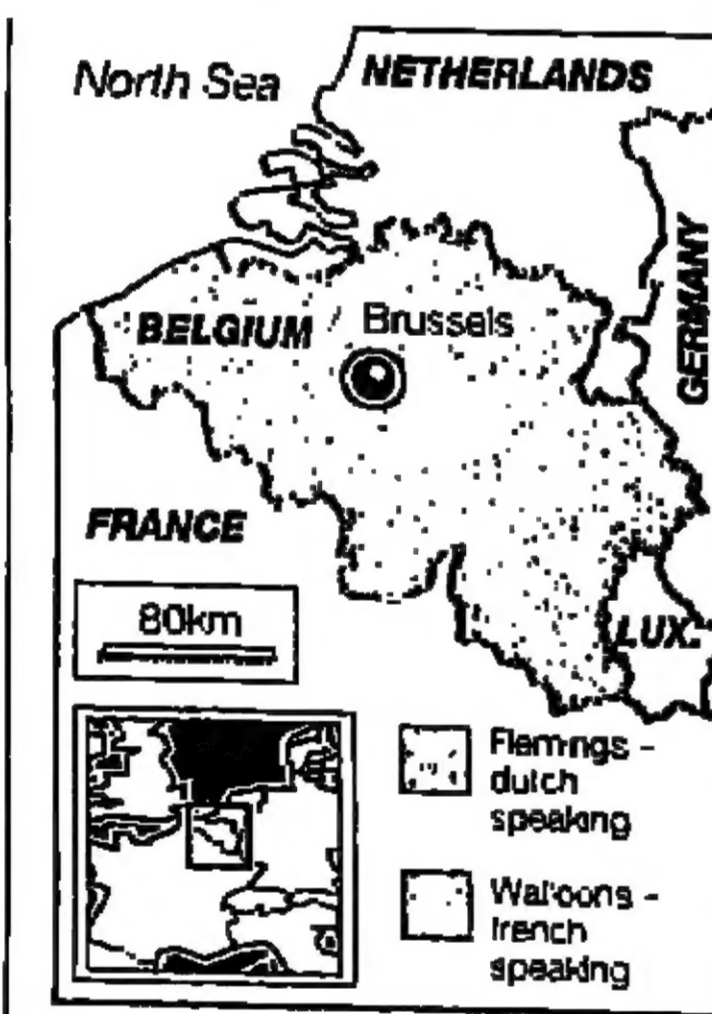
That it does so in three languages — French, Flemish and German — gives a clue to the tensions it seeks to defuse in a country barely 300km across and 150km from top to bottom. Belgium is preoccupied with separatist tendencies, at least as far as the Flemish north is concerned.

"Everything in Belgium has a linguistic dimension," a Flemish friend said. "And if there isn't one already, we'll find it."

Even the paedophile scandal, which has done much to unite the country in horror and grief, has a regional subtext. All the accused and all the victims in the early stages were Walloons — French speakers from the south and east. The discovery of the bodies of two Flemish teenagers buried under a workshop in Charleroi owned by the chief suspect, Marc Dutroux, added a new dimension.

While Au and Ergé were still missing, the Flemish papers gave them priority over Melissa and Julie, the eight-year-olds whose abduction tensified the Wallonian community and whose discovery, buried in another of Mr Dutroux's back gardens, caused a national outpouring of emotion.

The Flemish north — geographically smaller but now with a slightly larger population — is exercising its new economic superiority, after many years of inferiority to the Walloons. Hugo Schiltz, mayor of Antwerp, Belgium's second city, which is in



Flanders, said: "Many Flemings feel that our contribution to Wallonia is too high. I am a citizen of Belgium but my nationality is Flemish."

From the Francophone side, Jean Stengers, a former professor of history at the Université Libre in Brussels, said: "There is a deepening ditch between the two communities, different cultural and political élites. They lead separate lives, read different newspapers, watch their own television channels. We are condemned to live together but always to be in conflict."

Belgium's federal structure, adopted in 1993, gives administrative autonomy to three regions: Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels. The arrangement is due to be reviewed in 1999. The national government, led by Jean-Luc Dehaene, a Flemish Christian Democrat, has Flemish and Walloon ministers and French-socialist backing. Only the rightwing nationalist

Vinams Blok calls openly for independence for Flanders, but the more moderate parties also want greater devolved powers. The call centres on winning control of the social security budget.

For the first 150 years of the Belgian state, the Walloons — with heavy industry based on the mines and steel works of Liège, Namur and Charleroi — economically supported the farmers of Flanders. In the last 20 years, hi-tech industries have expanded in Flanders, while industrial plants in the south have decayed.

As well as an unemployment problem, Wallonia has an ageing population and a more socialist, interventionist tradition. The Flemish say they are paying too much to support the south — estimates vary from \$1.5 billion to \$8 billion a year — but no one has done a definitive calculation.

Pieter Vandermeersch, deputy editor of *De Standaard*, the Flemish broadsheet, said: "Before 2000, Wallonia will have to accept a degree of separatism. If not, Belgium will explode, violently perhaps."

At the heart of the separatist dilemma is the almost certainly insuperable problem of Brussels. It is surrounded by Flemish-speaking areas. Flanders claims it as its capital. But 85 per cent of its population speaks French. The Brusselsois do not identify much with either the Flemish or the Walloons. But neither side could cede control of the capital.

Mr Stengers believes an even greater force will keep Belgium together: the huge national debt. "Our debt is the greatest cement for national unity. Trying to divide it would mean the collapse of Belgian economic credibility."

Tories totter on the brink of defeat

James Lewis

IF 1996 did nothing else, it strengthened the case for fixed-term parliaments. But, because the prime minister of the day remains free to go to the polls at a time of his own choosing, the nation was forced to endure a year of non-stop electioneering.

John Major's parliamentary majority was steadily whittled down by defections, deaths and by-elections, and the Conservatives enter the new year as a minority government — the first in Britain for 17 years. The minority Callaghan government of the late seventies muddled along reasonably well with Liberal support, but Mr Major will find it much harder going.

Leading a party that is almost suicidally riven over Europe and monetary union, Mr Major could easily be brought down by a motion of no confidence between now and May, when a general election must be held. Pundits are already speculating that he may be forced to go to the country in February or early March.

The Home Secretary, Michael Howard, spent most of the year asserting the Conservatives' credentials as the party of law and order — a sure-fire vote-winner in the past. So the police got CS gas sprays, long-handled batons, and strengthened powers to stop and search. There is to be a national police squad to tackle fraud, drug-dealing and money laundering, and there were new laws to prosecute stalkers and to ban the ownership or sale of handguns over .22 calibre. And there may yet be a law to outlaw "Rambo" knives.

Around 80 per cent of the 250,000 handguns once held legally will now be outlawed. But shotguns, which can also kill people, escape the ban. In Britain, shooting is associated with handiwork; joining a good shoot is a big step up the social ladder in the shires.

The handgun ban — strongly opposed by shooting clubs — was in response to the killings of 16 children and a teacher at Dunblane in March. Lord Cullen, who chaired an inquiry into the massacre, considered that tighter control over the issue of gun licences could have prevented it. But Mr Howard insisted on being tougher, though not so tough as many opposition MPs who demanded the banning of handguns altogether.

Although it was an isolated incident, the Dunblane shooting, together with a machete attack on Birmingham schoolchildren by a paranoid schizophrenic, and the murder of a headmaster by a knife-wielding teenager, greatly heightened the public perception of crime and encouraged fevered calls for a restoration of "moral values".

France, the eloquent wife of the murdered headmaster, Philip Lawrence, caught the public imagination with her campaign for "moral regeneration", though no one seemed to know quite how to set about it. Broadcasters were urged to curb the portrayal of violence on TV, and the Government promised to restore religion to the schools' curriculum. The Labour party even toyed with the idea of a "national bedtime" for children.

Mr Howard's zeal brought him into conflict with the British and European courts, which repeatedly overturned his decisions as being



© 1996, 1997. VERY WELL, ALONE

either illegal or an abuse of his power. And his harsh proposals for American-style minimum sentencing also put him at odds with the judiciary, which complained that the Home Secretary was high-handedly usurping its powers.

The outgoing Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor, pointed out that Britain has had more Criminal Justice Acts in the past six years than in the previous 60, and complained about the damaging effect of wild swings in penal policy. Although the 1991 Criminal Justice Act aimed to reduce the numbers of those given custodial sentences on the grounds that prison simply did not work, Mr Howard lashed off on an opposite course that will increase the prison population — already a record 52,000 — by more than a quarter in the next decade.

Lawyers stand to profit handsomely from the sudden British appetite for American-style compensation demands. Policemen were awarded £1 million for the "trauma" they suffered in helping victims of the Hillsborough football disaster in Sheffield, when fans were crushed to death in an overcrowded enclosure.



Grieving widow Frances Lawrence led calls for a moral crusade

sure; "stressed" parents of children killed by a hospital nurse got £500,000. Huge sums continued to be paid out to Service women and homosexuals claiming wrongful dismissal from the armed forces.

The latest demand is by two 17-year-olds who, because they got poor exam results, have started proceedings against their school. Perhaps the Government is partly

By promoting Citizens' Charters, and pushing public services to publish performance records, it has encouraged the idea that those which do not meet measurable standards, such as school league tables, should pay compensation. Soon, it was suggested, children might be suing their parents for bringing them into such an uncertain world in the first place.

The threat of litigation may be raising the social costs of bad decision-making. Environmental health officials, for example, delayed publishing lists of shops selling meat that was suspected of causing the latest outbreak of food poisoning in Lanarkshire for fear of action by a wrongly-identified shop.

Education, clearly marked as an election issue, was seldom out of the news. When the number of passes in A level exams continued to rise, there were cries of "falling standards". Teachers rebutted the claim, but the Education Secretary, Gillian Shephard, is to make the exams harder — a ploy which may at least reduce the demand for university places. Meanwhile, the universities, hard-pressed for funds, threatened to impose education fees of around £1,000 a year on students, on top of the money most of them now have to borrow to maintain themselves.

The Prime Minister spoke of his vision of "a grammar school for every town", though Labour retains its faith in a non-selective, comprehensive system of schools. But Labour's leader, Tony Blair, and a leading front-bencher, Harriet Harman, chose to send their own children to grant-maintained or selective schools. Leftwingers muttered their displeasure, but few dare rock the Labour boat with an election in sight.

Although the Government could hardly be blamed for "mad cow disease" — bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE — it was blamed for the way it handled the consequences of the disease and for its failure to persuade the European Union to lift the ban on the export of British beef world-wide. Because of the link between BSE and scrapie in sheep, the Germans banned the import of British lamb as well.

Livestock farmers were furious, not only over the order to cull all dairy cattle more than 30 months old — which, on some veterinary

evidence, is unjustified and unnecessary — but over what they consider to be rigidly compensation payments and the slowness in carrying out the cull because of insufficient incinerators.

Two children were found, in March, to have the form of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease which has been linked to BSE, but there has been no further evidence to suggest that beef is any longer unsafe. Although British beef consumption slumped by nearly 30 per cent early in the year, it was, by December, only 3 per cent below pre-scrape levels. But the export ban will remain in place until EU ministers are satisfied that the cull has been completed.

A year ago, Mr Major looked with hope to a peace settlement in Ireland — an achievement that would revive his party's flagging fortunes and win him an honoured place in the history books. But it was not to be. The IRA "ceasefire" came to an end in February with a huge bomb blast in London's Canary Wharf, followed in June by a bomb which made Manchester's centre look like Beirut, blitzed 670 businesses and caused damage put at £500 million.

After much procrastination, Ulster Unionists agreed to accept an American, George Mitchell, as chairman of the peace talks in Belfast, which took months even to arrive at an agenda. In the absence of a new ceasefire, the IRA's political wing, Sinn Féin, remains excluded from the talks. Britain now demands a "definite and lasting ceasefire", and proof that terrorists have halted all violent activities, such as "punishment beatings", and stopped building up weapon supplies, before Sinn Féin can be allowed in.

"Socialist" may be a banned word in Mr Blair's new Labour party, but in some constituencies its banner will be flown by the Socialist Labour party formed by Arthur Scargill, leader of the fast-dwindling National Union of Mineworkers. It won few defections from the Labour party or the trade unions.

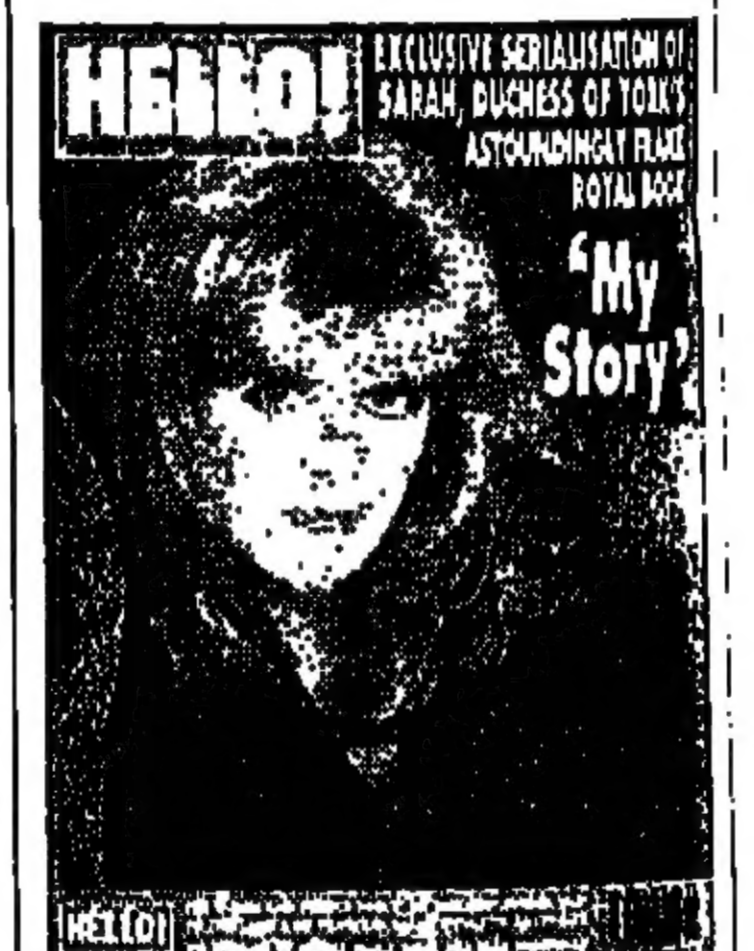
Mr Blair has told the unions they can expect no special favours if Labour wins the election. They may get a national minimum wage, though not necessary the hourly rate of £4.26 which they demand. Nor will new Labour rescind the anti-union legislation of the Thatcher years. The Government

now threatens public sector unions with even more legislation to curb their activities. They could be required to give longer notice of intended strike action, and customers may be empowered to sue them for compensation if they suffer losses through strikes. This was another "tough" response to a few 24- and 48-hour stoppages by postal workers and sporadic stoppages by drivers on the London Underground.

Meanwhile MPs voted themselves a pay rise of 36 per cent, 10 times the rate of inflation, while urging restraint on everyone else.

According to the world's lifestyle pages, London became everybody's favourite place: the hub of the fashion world, with the trendiest bands, the best art scene and the hippest atmosphere. Respondents to a survey of 500 world companies considered it to be the best place to do business. They reckoned it had the best access to markets, best availability of office space, best telecommunications, best transport links with other cities, and was easiest to travel around in. Their only big complaint was about pollution.

The city itself was more sceptical. A report on "A Capital Divided" pointed out that London's living costs were the highest in the country, and that the capital had more low-income — as well as more high-income — families; that Inner London, where poverty is concentrated, had more people sleeping rough; more people with mental illness;



Duchess of York: selling her story to help pay her huge debts

and a higher rate of infant mortality than anywhere else.

The royal family continued to delight its detractors and add to the despair of those who bemoan the lowering of moral standards. The marriages of the Prince of Wales and his brother, the Duke of York, were both dissolved. As the mother of the second in line to the throne, Princess Diana — now Diana, Princess of Wales — received a comfortable settlement of £20 million but is no longer Her Royal Highness.

Fergie, the Duchess of York, fared rather less well and is reportedly in debt to the tune of more than £3 million. But sales of her autobiography, trailed in Hello! magazine, suffered from the earlier publication of a more lurid account of her sexual exploits.

The entire royal family met to discuss ways of "modernising" themselves, possibly by slimming down what they describe as the Firm, but nothing emerged. There were suggestions that the Prince of Wales might make more public appearances in the company of Camilla Parker Bowles, with whom he is still having an affair when he was still married. Public opinion, however, shows no sign of warming to the idea of a Queen Camilla.

Le Monde

France stands alone in row with US

Alain Frachon

FRANCO-AMERICAN relations are showing signs of wear and tear. This is nothing new: relations between the two countries have always involved periods of calm followed by phases of misunderstanding. Indeed, the rift between France and the United States is a standard topic on the opinion pages of US newspapers.

Recently, the air of misunderstanding has boiled up, resulting in open conflict. Both sides may point out that Clinton and Chirac are hitting it off marvellously, or swear that the bilateral relationship is strong enough to allow differences of opinion. But the fact remains that the list of differences is growing dangerously longer.

Africa is the most recent subject of dispute. The row between Jacques Godefrain, the French minister with special responsibility for co-operation, and the outgoing US secretary of state, Warren Christopher, over the legitimacy of their respective countries' interests on the continent has been superseded by a dispute centring on the Great Lakes region of Africa.

The area, rich in the raw materials for fuelling such disputes, includes the vast expanse of Zaire, the English-speaking region of

Uganda, and francophone countries such as Burundi and Rwanda.

Each side suspects the other of having dark intentions. Paris believes that Washington is engaging in a "regional ploy" by supporting the "Tutsi connection" that holds power in Kampala, Kigali and Bujumbura in order to carve out a sphere of influence in the region — a policy that is apparently pursued at the risk of destabilising Zaire, or even favouring the break-up of the country. The US State Department's denials of this accusation have sounded rather limp.

Paris has come close to accusing Washington of toppling a planned military-humanitarian operation in the region in order not to impede the gains of Zaire's rebel Tutsi guerrillas, who are supported by Rwanda. Washington, meanwhile, is inclined to suspect Paris of wanting to mount the operation in order to help Zaire's president, Mobutu Sese Seko, whose regime is slowly collapsing.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali's bid for a second term as United Nations secretary-general is another issue likely to leave scars and to hamper co-operation between the two countries' diplomats at the UN.

By throwing its weight behind the Egyptian diplomat — a French-speaker and a regular guest in

French ministerial circles — France was seen to be taking an honourable stand for the cause of the Third World, and particularly Africa, and the French language. It was regarded as a battle to be conducted with panache, as in the heyday of Gaullist diplomacy.

Unfortunately, after assailing Washington's clumsy anti-Boutros-Ghali denigration and congratulating the French on their diplomacy, the Africans realistically, if ungratefully, signalled they had decided to drop Boutros-Ghali and, by the same token, Paris.

In the Middle East, the US did not appreciate the way France barged into the diplomatic arena during the confrontation in Lebanon between Israel and the Syrian-backed Hizbullah militia.

Far more serious, however, is the dispute over Nato. President Jacques Chirac, aware that his partners in the European Union would not follow him in building a European defence outside Nato, decided to take France back into the organisation's military structure (which it left in 1966).

But Chirac will not go any further, except on one condition: France wants a truly European presence in the alliance's command structure. The US strongly opposes the idea. An exchange of notes

between Clinton and Chirac does not seem to have helped to bring the two parties any closer.

If this quarrel is not settled, it could have lasting and very negative repercussions on an issue that is essential to the future of the EU — the constitution of a European defence.

France does not want the maintenance of a strong transatlantic link to provide the impetus for an increase in America's sphere of influence.

Unfortunately, Paris finds itself alone on this point, its view not really shared by its European partners. But the truth is that the European positions put forward by France are not even shared outside the Elysée Palace.

France attributes to its partners a "European desire" in the diplomatic and military areas, and especially a "desire" to be free of the US, which they do not share. And this view is likely to receive even less enthusiasm from the new members of Nato, to be drawn from eastern Europe.

So the current friction between Paris and Washington also reflects a problem in European relations: the gap between what France and the other member states expect of the European Union.

(December 10)

Colombian army link to death squads

Anne Proenza in Bogotá

HUMAN rights violations in Colombia have taken a turn for the worse, and attention was drawn to this on December 10 when France's Human Rights Prize was awarded to the José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Action Group.

Highly damaging accusations have been made in recent Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch reports on Colombia, and both organisations are urging the United States to suspend military aid to Bogotá immediately to curb the activities of paramilitary units involved in serious rights violations.

The European Parliament passed a similar resolution on October 24, while the United Nations decided — with the approval of the Colombian government — to open an office of the Human Rights Authority in Bogotá.

The Colombian daily El Tiempo reports that in the past two weeks at least 73 people were killed by paramilitary groups in the north of the country. These groups, whose numbers are estimated at about 2,500 men, are increasing their influence, especially in the Urabá, Córdoba, Magdalena Medio, Llanos and César regions.

A "secret" document widely circulated in the country reveals that a "third Colombian national self-defence meeting" recently decided to make the paramilitary groups the "spearhead of the struggle" against the guerrilla movement because the "Colombian armed forces are operationally incapacitated", hamstringed by



Fear is the key... A policeman searches youngsters for guns in the city of Medellín. Human rights organisations accuse security forces of links with armed groups involved in abuses

"pressures from human rights groups and other institutions".

On December 8, the Colombian defence minister, Juan Carlos Espartero, reacted sharply to another massacre of 11 peasants reportedly carried out by a paramilitary group. He declared that he could not have people "taking the law into their own hands". However, according to Human Rights Watch, most of the paramilitary groups have been set up with the approval of the military authorities.

A report drawn up in 1992 by several human rights groups claims that many high-ranking officers, including generals, have been involved in operations later blamed on paramilitary groups. In the

absence of documented charges, however, the military's guilt has never been proven.

The Colombian ambassador in Brussels, who has since resigned, was denounced by the European Parliament, which suspected him of using armed groups to clear peasants off his property.

The activities of these paramilitaries are determined as much by self-interest as by political objectives. Over the past 10 years, landholders and drug traffickers have been financing groups that they use to drive peasants off land, which they then acquire cheaply.

The Colombian government has taken the unprecedented step of setting up official bodies entrusted

with ensuring that basic rights are complied with. President Ernesto Samper himself has spoken out on the subject.

But in the view of Alirio Uribe, chairman of the Lawyers' Action Group, this just "goes to show that the situation is extremely worrying".

The group — which has been campaigning in Colombia for the past 30 years — says that the "impunity ratio" for crimes is particularly high: of 100 people murdered in Colombia every day, 10 are killed for political reasons. Every other day, one person goes missing. To date more than 750,000 people have had to leave their homes as a result of political violence.

(December 11)

Scandals dent Japan's ambitions

Phillippe Pons in Tokyo

CAN Japan hope to play a major world role while it faces so much trouble at home? Shinji Sato, the minister of international trade and industry (MITI), was not present at the recent ministerial conference of the World Trade Organisation in Singapore and it was an indication of the inertia that has overtaken a government bedevilled by a series of corruption scandals.

Japan expected to project its image as an honest broker between the industrialised world and the rest of the Asia-Pacific region. But Sato was detained in Tokyo, where he had to appear before the Japanese parliament to answer questions concerning the activities of about 100 senior civil servants in his ministry who were in the pay of a petroleum products company.

The practice of giving and receiving bribes is endemic in Japan. And scandals are breaking at a steady rate in spite of changes promised by the prime minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto. Reform of the administration is the goal he has set for this, his second, government.

The December 3 arrest of Nobuharu Okamitsu, administrative vice-minister of health, shows how high the corruption reaches. An administrative vice-minister is the highest-ranking civil servant in a ministry, and often performs the work of the minister.

The sad irony is that Okamitsu was appointed to his post with a specific remit to uncover further corruption in the health ministry relating to a HIV-infected blood scandal. The charge against Okamitsu is that he collected 99 million yen (\$800,000) in pay-offs in return for granting state subsidies to companies competing to build homes for the elderly.

The five-year infrastructure programme for the elderly, which has a colossal budget of more than \$90 million, was, in part, drafted under Okamitsu's guidance.

For building enterprises, badly affected by the crisis in the public works sector, this was manna from heaven. And they have rushed in, rewarding bureaucrats lavishly along the way.

A few days before Okamitsu was detained, Shigeru Chatani, another senior health ministry civil servant, was arrested. On secondment from the central administration in the Saitama prefecture (outside Tokyo), between 1992 and 1995, Chatani handed out subsidies and building permits in proportion to the bribe received, while at the same time setting up a network of clients that enabled him to run for election to parliament on October 10. However, even with the prime minister's blessing, he failed to win a seat.

Until now, Hashimoto has managed to stay above the fray. But for how long? He inherited from his father, a former health minister, the lobby of businessmen and bureaucrats who hang around the ministry. This lobby, it is said, has the "highest esteem" for Okamitsu and approved his appointment as vice-minister of health.

(December 10)

Keeping wildlife in Paris under wraps

Véronique Maurus looks at the work of the capital's gamekeeper

IT IS a little-known fact that the Greater Paris area has its own gamekeeper — or, to be more accurate, its "national hunting and wildlife warden". Pierre, like his warden colleagues elsewhere in France, wears a green and sand-colored uniform and a kepi, and the revolver in his holster is loaded.

He performs a wide range of tasks. He does his best to nab poachers who operate in the few pockets of woodland still left on the outskirts of the capital. He makes sure people do not take pot shots at protected species. He combats the illegal trade in animals on the endangered species list. He even inspects game sold by butchers.

National wardens used to be little more than an anti-poaching brigade controlled by the powerful hunters' federations. They have now become guardians of wildlife who work for the government and co-operate with police, customs and the veterinary and fire services. "They are the true police force of our national heritage," says Jean-Marie Ballu, head of the National Hunting Bureau (ONC), which employs the wardens.

Paul, who is Paris's fish warden, works hand in hand with Pierre. He wears the same uniform as Pierre, but does not carry a gun; anglers — even in Paris — are peaceful folk.

It is not Pierre's or Paul's job to play at being Rambo. The ONC has special units for that kind of thing. In the course of an incident involving helicopters and heavy exchanges of fire in October, they arrested a gang of poachers in the Pyrenees who had been shooting mountain goats with machine-guns.

Gene are the days when the poacher, immortalised by Maurice Genevoix's best-selling novel *Rabotli* (1925), would count his cartridges and kill only what he needed to eat. Today's poachers work in gangs, are highly trained and over-

equipped, and kill as many deer and boar as they can before making off in their four-wheel drives. They sell to butchers, restaurants and taxidermists. It is a lucrative trade: a red deer fetches anything up to 15,000 francs (\$2,800).

Keeping tabs on taxidermists is difficult. The law is so strict — they are not allowed to handle any protected or poached animal — that fraud is widespread. "There are 400 officially registered taxidermists in France," says one of them, Michel Vaillier. "But the illegal trade is done only in underground workshops, of which there are believed to be 2,000-3,000."

With numbers like that, routine inspections are ineffective. But sometimes Pierre has a stroke of luck. Last year, his jaw dropped as he looked into the window of a specialised caterer: it was clock-block with stuffed animals — stoats, owls and other birds of prey — all of them protected species.

Sometimes he gets depressed about the public's ignorance of the law. For on top of the fraudsters, there are a lot of thoughtless people who satisfy their collecting urge by buying monkeys, parrots, mygales, and even panthers and anacondas, thus encouraging the international trade in such animals and sometimes endangering their own lives.

He and some veterinary officers recently swooped on a bistro where a bad-tempered chimpanzee was threatening customers. "That's when you see how stupid people can be," he says. "When you look at a chimp's teeth, you say to yourself that its owners must be mad: it could easily bite your head off."

There are thought to be 30,000 pet monkeys in Paris. The fire service has even set up a special "monkey unit". Someone recently spotted a crocodile having a swim in the Marne river. It is not known whether it survived the onset of winter.

Tracking down monkeys and crocodiles is not really part of Pierre's job. He intervenes in an advisory capacity, as well as prevent-



tively, in an attempt to flush out organised smugglers. The trade in rare animals is extremely lucrative. Certain brightly coloured macaws under threat of extinction can fetch up to 300,000 francs.

Small-time smugglers flying in from South America regularly bring in parrots squeezed into cardboard canisters. Bigger fry transport animals through three or four countries so as to cover their tracks. According to international organisations, the smuggling of protected species is the third-largest illegal trade in the world after drugs and arms trafficking.

The mixing of genres is becoming increasingly common: "Reptiles are often used to transport diamonds or

drugs," Pierre says. "A boa takes a week to digest a rabbit. The goods come out intact. We keep a very close eye on such animals. People are getting more and more cunning."

With the help of customs and the police, Pierre makes spot checks on all the middlemen suspected of supplying customers with such animals — pet shops, zoos, circuses, tamers, bogus breeders and so on.

It is a painstaking job. All owners of protected animals are required by law to have an entitlement certificate and to keep a record of purchases and sales. But even well-established pet shops often break the rules. Pierre recently checked out a supermarket specialising in pets and found some rare parrots

next to the canaries. The store manager said she was about to get a certificate and did not keep a record of what she bought and sold. Pierre gave her the benefit of the doubt.

Paris and its suburbs also have their own population of wild animals — rabbits, foxes, weasels, starlings, magpies, crows, kestrels, wood-pigeons, mallard — which it is Pierre's job to protect and, often, prevent from causing damage. Most urbanised species are pests.

Rabbits, which tend to proliferate around airports, dig holes in lawns, destroy flowerbeds and ruin football pitches. Foxes can pass on rabies. Stone martens hide in lofts, where they destroy insulation, electrical wiring and alarm devices. "Stone martens are playful animals, and they love digging up flowers in cemeteries," he says.

PIERRE advises local councils on how to cope with the animal population. Sometimes he urges them to install wire netting, sometimes to call in one of Paris's 50 or so registered trappers. But he has no illusions. Overzealous animal lovers destroy traps that have been set to protect nestlings from predators. Councils are reluctant to be seen destroying pests because they fear an environmentalist backlash.

Recently, the St Denis council called Pierre in. A sick fox had been found hiding in a staircase. The council has no animal pound, and so one wanted to kill the animal, even though it was potentially dangerous. They left Pierre to deal with it.

Paul's problem is the giant catfish that fishermen have introduced into Lake Vincennes. Although very good to eat, such fish can grow up to two metres in length and are carnivorous.

Was it true, as environmentalists have claimed, that giant catfish are not averse to the occasional duck or lap dog? "That's rubbish!" Paul said. "The ducks are dying from disease. It's not the catfish, but pollution. The local council recently released 42 ducks on to the lake to replace the ailing population. 'Not afraid, surely?' asked Pierre. 'I'm afraid so,'" Paul replied. "They're not allowed to — mallard is a wild species. But what can you do when the authorities themselves break the law?"

(December 5)

French regions at odds over the bear facts

Stéphane Thépot

THE Portet d'Aspet pass, situated in superb Pyrenean scenery at an altitude of 1,089m, marks the geographical dividing line between the Ariège and the Haute-Garonne.

It is also the point at which the local population's attitude to bears — once numerous in the region and now virtually extinct — changes radically: the Haute-Garonne side proudly proclaims itself to be "bear country" and favours their reintroduction, while inhabitants of the Ariège categorically reject the animal.

At the beginning of last summer, two she-bears captured in Slovenia were released in the mountains that form part of the commune of Melles, only a few kilometres as the crow flies from the Ariège.

The mayor of Melles had been waiting for this moment since 1993, when he signed a charter with the then environment minister, Michel Barnier, providing for the reintroduction of bears on two conditions: that the government would come up

with aid for the economic development of the area, and that it would provide assurances that the bolstering of the bear population would impose no particular constraints on local inhabitants.

This approach was deliberately different from the one adopted by an earlier environment minister, Brice Lalonde, in the Béarn, a part of the Pyrenees farther to the west, and now the only area in France where a few bears still live in their natural state.

Lalonde's plan to set up special bear reserves that would to all intents and purposes be sanctuaries from which man was banned had the effect of polarising the hostility of hunters, sheep farmers and local councillors.

"You can't conduct an environmental policy against the people's will — you have to have them on your side," Barnier stressed when he came to Melles. Melles and three other small neighbouring communes in the Haute-Garonne that are sympathetic to this new approach have together formed an

Association for Economic and Tourist Development (Adet).

But Slovenian bears do not read charters or recognise borders. After their release one of them, called Ziva, made a beeline for the Aran Valley in Spain, while the other, Melba, set up her main territory in the Ariège. Both animals turned their noses up at the feeding sites set up on Adet territory in the hope of encouraging them to settle there. The bears were more interested in the flocks of sheep that spend the summer grazing in the neighbouring mountains.

So far, the monitoring team has accepted that 17 attacks on sheep have taken place, resulting in the death of 40 animals. The grievances of angry shepherds have been passed on to the team by local councillors.

In September, the 26 communes forming the canton of Castillon-en-Couserans (Ariège) officially called for Melba to be recaptured and the reintroduction experiment to be halted.

Robert Zouch, the Socialist general councillor is outraged. "Melba is just a wretched illegal immigrant who has been abandoned by her family," he says. André Rigoni, a biologist who heads Adet, points out that stray dogs and lightning cause much more damage to flocks every year than the newly arrived she-bear.

Rigoni, who was hired to monitor the bears, admits he now spends more time working on the problem of their "social acceptability" than on his scientific reports. But there are a number of farmers and councillors, particularly in the Haute-Garonne, who say they are prepared to support and take part in the experiment now under way.

There are advantages for farmers in the quite generous scheme to compensate for loss of livestock (about \$250 per sheep killed) and in the various mountain-grazing subsidies available on Adet territory.

And councillors want to make sure their communes do not miss the boat if the "bear country" slogan turns out to have the effect of boosting tourism. The interest of Haute-Garonne councillors has increased now that an old plan for a "viewing park", which would enable thou-

sands of visitors to look at bears in situ, has been resuscitated.

"It's a major project," says Rigoni enthusiastically. "It will enable people to see every species of bear in the world except for the polar bear and the panda."

Forty hectares have already been earmarked for the project near the small winter sports resort of Mouris.

Is an economic miracle on the cards? "Lourdes took off because of the Virgin Mary; we've got our bears," says Rigoni. He has to admit, though, that tourists have not exactly taken his village by storm. The local sheep-farmer, who sells ewe's-milk cheeses called "Pays de l'Ours" (Bear Country), grumbles that there was not even the faintest upturn in his cheese sales last summer.

(December 3)

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The Washington Post

Nigeria's Rulers Mix Oil and Money

The military leaders are using a potent formula to keep sanctions at bay, writes Glenn Frankel

WHEN NIGERIA'S military government hanged the writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other political activists in November 1995, world leaders such as Bill Clinton and Nelson Mandela reacted with shock, anger and the promise of punitive measures. But the campaign for severe sanctions never got off the ground — thanks in large part to an aggressive lobbying effort spearheaded by the Nigerian government and the oil companies that have a major financial stake in the African country.

Nigeria's lobbying success is a textbook example of how even the most unpopular of foreign regimes can neutralize their opposition in Washington with money and influential friends. It also illustrates the Clinton administration's lack of resolve when it comes to Africa. Rather than take the lead, the administration sought a consensus with countries in Europe and Africa for harsh measures against Nigeria. When that effort failed, it allowed the fate of the world's largest black-ruled nation to slip silently from its agenda.

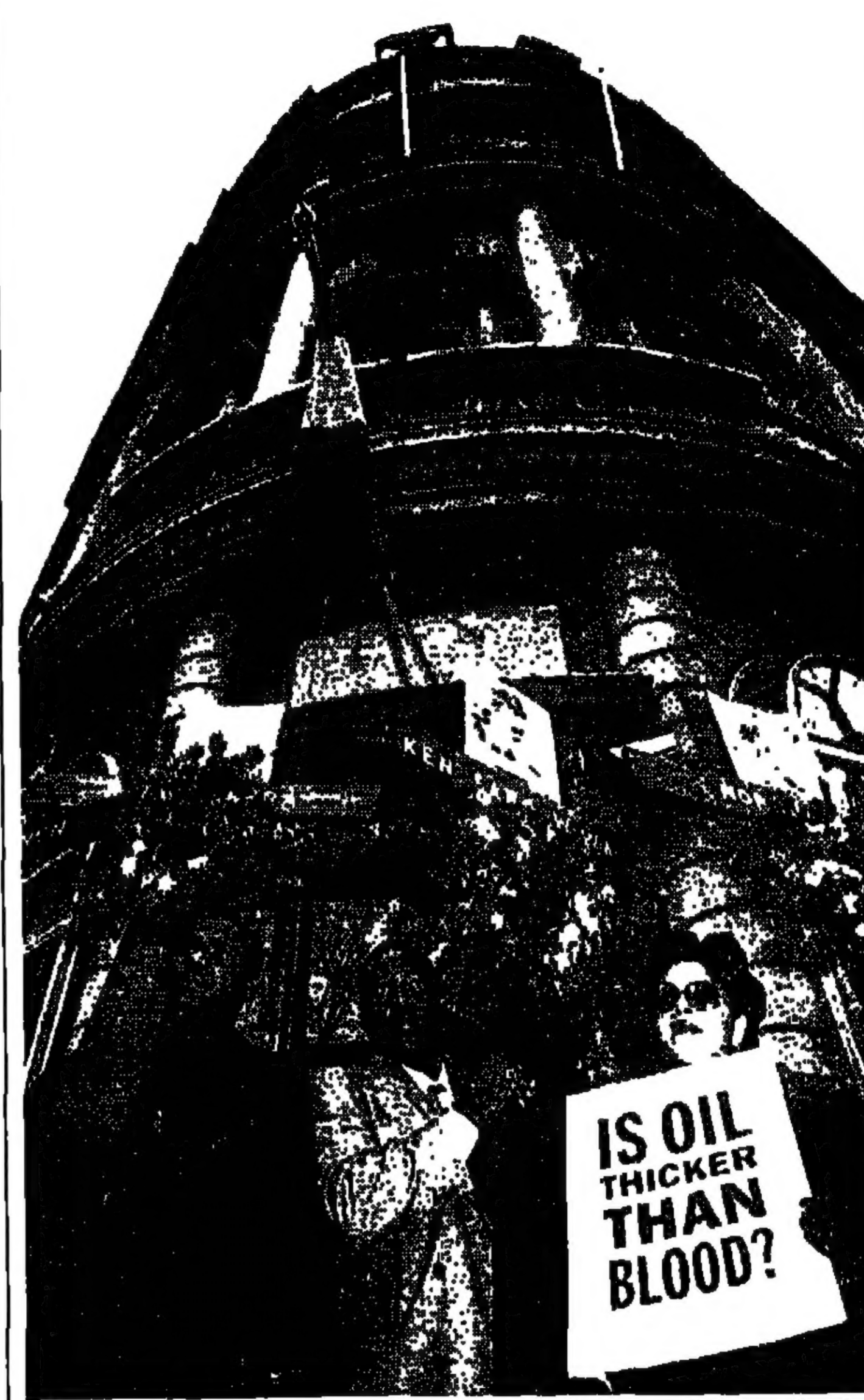
"The very aggressive rhetoric of a year ago ended up basically as just hot air," said Janet Fleiselman, Washington director of Human Rights Watch/Africa.

Nigeria is at once both Africa's most promising country and one of its most troubled. The world's ninth largest oil producer — it supplies about 600,000 barrels a day to the United States, 8 percent of total US oil imports — Nigeria remains burdened by ethnic, geographic and religious conflicts and has spent most of its 35 years of independence under military rule.

Gen. Sani Abacha became the latest of a long line of Nigerian military masters in 1993 when he annulled the presidential election that was supposed to restore civilian rule and imprisoned the apparent winner, Moshhood Abiola, along with hundreds of supporters.

Abacha's regime has staged its harshest crackdown in Ogoniland in southeastern Nigeria, home of some of the country's richest oil fields. Saro-Wiwa's dissident movement began as a protest against the poverty of Ogoniland and environmental degradation there, and demanded a share of oil revenues for the region. The government saw the movement as a secessionist threat. A military tribunal convicted Saro-Wiwa and his backers of inciting the murder of four pro-government tribal leaders, and sentenced them to death without appeal to civilian courts. Royal Dutch Shell, which has been criticized by human rights advocates and environmentalists for allegedly colluding with the regime in repressing local protests and despoiling the region, declined to intercede on Saro-Wiwa's behalf, and then made a plea at the last possible minute.

After the hangings, a coalition of American human rights, environmental, black and labor groups launched a campaign for strong sanctions. One of its leaders, Randall Robinson, president of the lobby-



A demonstration in support of Ken Saro-Wiwa outside the Nigerian embassy in London. PHOTOGRAPH BY GRAHAM TURKIE

ing group TransAfrica, organized a letter to President Clinton signed by 54 prominent American blacks — including Bill Cosby, Jesse Jackson, Coretta Scott King and 28 members of Congress — calling for tough measures against the Abacha regime.

Sen. Nancy Kassebaum (R-Kansas) and Rep. Donald M. Payne (D-New Jersey) introduced companion bills in the Senate and House that would have cut off most new US investment in Nigeria and laid the groundwork for an international oil embargo.

At the same time, the Clinton administration announced a set of mild sanctions, including a ban on sales of military equipment, a reduction in humanitarian aid, and a recall of the US ambassador and a broadening of an existing ban on visas for Nigerian officials and their families. Then, after an initial high-level review, State Department officials said they would take further steps in collaboration with European and African states, and did not exclude an embargo on Nigerian oil sales. Nigeria receives more than \$10 billion a year from oil, accounting for 90 percent of its foreign export earnings and 80 percent of government revenues, and an international embargo would have caused immediate economic pain.

Nigeria fought back. The Lagos government employed the services of nine US public relations and lobbying firms spanning the American political spectrum. Among them were the law firm of Washington &

Christian, run by liberal black Democrats, which reported receiving \$600,000 from Nigeria for the first six months of the year, and Symms, Lehn & Associates, an Alexandria firm headed by former Idaho senator Steve Symms (R) and Alfred Lehn, former aide to Bob Dole, which reported receiving about \$300,000. Based on disclosure reports and other information, Nigeria's critics have estimated that the regime has spent more than \$10 million in the United States on lobbying and public relations efforts since the hanging.

The lobbying effort effectively killed the Kassebaum-Payne bills, which were never even voted on in their respective legislative committees. Meanwhile, the Clinton administration was also spinning its wheels. Advocates for further sanctions — including then National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, John Shattuck, the assistant secretary of state for human rights, and Timothy Wirth, undersecretary of state for global affairs — pressed for tougher measures. They were opposed by representatives from the Department of Commerce and other economics-oriented Cabinet agencies, who argued that unilateral sanctions would only succeed in pushing up the price of heating oil for Americans.

Among the documents they cited was a report from the Petroleum Industry Research Foundation in New York that an oil embargo would disproportionately affect New England, a region that is a major customer for clean-burning Nigerian "sweet" crude used in heating oil.

Pointing to the example of Iraq, opponents within the administration also said sanctions would likely hurt average Nigerians while leaving the country's rulers unscathed — and

manded US sanctions against white-ruled South Africa in the 1980s could not ignore repression when practiced by black rulers in Africa. But he says he knew from the beginning that sanctions against Nigeria would be a hard sell because the regime had lots of oil money. Even before the hangings, he says, he was approached by a Nigerian businessman with close ties to the government who offered him up to \$1 million to drop his criticism of the regime. Robinson rejected the offer.

"Oil money makes a huge difference because it puts a spunk in the spine of your enemy," he said. Testimony against the sanctions bill before a Senate subcommittee by Mosley-Braun and Rep. William J. Jefferson (D-Louisiana) helped create the impression that the Congressional Black Caucus was divided on the issue, according to a Senate staff member who worked on the bill. This made it easy for other lawmakers to beg off. But he said a bigger factor was the lobbying effort by major oil companies such as Mobil Oil, Amoco and Chevron, as well as several non-oil firms with involvement in a \$2.8 billion liquefied natural gas project in southeast Nigeria.

One of the key lobbying groups was the 107-member Corporate Council on Africa, a private, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting Africa's economic development and business relationships between African countries and US corporations. The council, which reported receiving \$10,000 each from Conoco and Chevron to lobby on the issue, argued to lawmakers and administration officials that dialogue rather than confrontation was more likely to produce political reforms in Nigeria. "We honestly don't believe a unilateral oil embargo against Nigeria would accomplish much except to further concentrate power and wealth in the hands of a few," said David H. Miller, the council's executive director. "It's a great press release but it would be counterproductive."

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Pointing to the example of Iraq, opponents within the administration also said sanctions would likely hurt average Nigerians while leaving the country's rulers unscathed — and

could lead to retaliation against American companies doing business in Nigeria. Before his trip to Africa in October, then Secretary of State Warren Christopher told a breakfast meeting of representatives of non-governmental organizations that he was "very uncomfortable" with the administration's Nigeria policy, according to two participants. But Robinson and other critics said Christopher himself had appeared disengaged from the issue.

The administration opted instead for more consultations with its allies. President Clinton wrote to European leaders last March, proposing a series of steps — such as freezing Nigerian assets in their countries — designed to pinch the country's rulers without damaging its economy. But US officials say the leaders of Britain, Germany and France — home to several large oil companies with major stakes in Nigeria — were lukewarm at best. Mandela, the South African president who had helped engineer Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth of Nations within days of the hangings, backed off after the United States failed to respond to his public call for more severe sanctions. "The US wanted cover from Mandela and he wanted cover from us," said one US diplomat. "It just didn't work out."

With the first anniversary of the hangings, human rights activists renewed their campaign with demonstrations and renewed calls for an oil embargo against Nigeria and a boycott of Shell, which is the biggest and most influential of the foreign companies operating there. Relatives of Saro-Wiwa and another of the victims have filed suit against Shell in federal court in New York alleging the company collaborated with the regime in human rights and environmental abuses, allegations the company has denied.

The Nigerian government has released some political prisoners and held local elections in an attempt to show it is moving toward a return to civilian democracy in 1998. But Abiola and many of his supporters remain in detention and Kudrat Abiola, who had pressed publicly for her husband's release, was killed in June on the streets of Lagos by unknown gunmen. The government used the killing as justification for the arrest of two dozen family members and supporters.

Administration officials say they have not ruled out further sanctions against Nigeria, and they believe the Lagos regime is acting cautiously because it knows its behavior is under scrutiny. But a new test looms.

Nineteen more of Saro-Wiwa's followers still face trial for the same charges that led to his execution. Will the threat of sanctions stay the hangman? Or will the regime calculate that the Clinton administration and the West will again opt for sweeping declarations of condemnation — and no action?

Military Goes to War on Narcotics

The use of troops to counter smugglers reflects the Pentagon's growing involvement in law enforcement duties, writes **Jim McGee** in Fort Bliss, Texas

THROUGH night-vision goggles, the drug smugglers resembled a pack team in an old Western movie: three riders and nine horses, winding single file down a rugged ravine in the Coronado National Forest near Nogales, Arizona. U.S. Army Special Forces soldiers, watching the remote mountain pass from two camouflaged observation posts in the trees, waited until the procession had snarled past before issuing an alert over a secure radio channel.

At Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, a U.S. Forest Service officer sitting in the base command center jotted down the Green Berets' information and relayed it to a National Guard OH-58 helicopter crew, which took off for the ravine. Using an infrared radar system and map coordinates provided by the Army, the helicopter crew soon spotted the horses and riders. Within minutes, a posse of sheriff's deputies and Forest Service officials driving Ford Broncos had arrested the smugglers and seized their booty: 2,404 pounds of cocaine.

The Coronado Forest episode, which occurred last year, may have had more dramatic sweep than most drug busts. But the case was typical in illuminating the extent to which the U.S. military has become embedded in the nation's drug war, as the Pentagon increasingly is drawn into domestic police missions long considered the province of civilian law enforcement agencies.

With little public fanfare and scant congressional scrutiny, the military's domestic role has become broad and deep. Since 1989, when Congress and the Bush administration formally ordered the military into the drug fight, the Pentagon has spent more than \$7 billion on counter-drug operations. Last year, more than 8,000 active duty and reserve soldiers, sailors and Air Force personnel — a force almost equivalent to an infantry division — participated in 754 counter-drug support missions on U.S. soil that led to 1,894 arrests.

Special Forces teams monitor the Rio Grande, Marines patrol the California desert and Army intelligence officers watch for criminal activity from investigative centers in Miami, New York, Los Angeles, Houston and Greenbelt, Maryland.

The Army squad that spotted the smugglers in Arizona was part of Joint Task Force Six (JTF-6), the Defense Department headquarters that links the nation's military forces with domestic law enforcement agencies. In promoting a partnership between military and civilian forces, JTF-6 circulates to police departments a 55-page "Operational Support Planning Guide" marketing the use of Green Beret units, Navy SEAL teams and Marine reconnaissance patrols.

Many supporters of the military's involvement in drug enforcement, citing the threat to the nation's social and economic order, believe the Pentagon's role should be even greater. "I think it should be getting larger," said Rep. Bill Zeff, R-New Hampshire, chairman of the House Government Reform and Oversight national security, international affairs and criminal justice subcommittee.

For some military commanders, counter-drug operations provide useful training while making soldiers feel that they're involved in a vital mission. Civilian law enforcement officials are generally grateful for the technological acumen and professional competence the armed forces provide, particularly with sophisticated surveillance and communications systems.

The billions spent mustering the military for anti-drug duty has yielded an uncertain dividend. The availability of cocaine, heroin and marijuana in U.S. cities has not decreased, according to federal drug officials. And critics contend the military has edged toward a legal threshold that has been a singular feature of U.S. civil-military relations for more than a century: a general ban on military involvement in routine domestic law enforcement.

"There is a very strong claim that we are already pressing the outer bounds of what is constitutionally desirable," said James X. Dempsey of the Center for National Security Studies in Washington. "Even an ardent drug warrior like McCaffrey expresses wariness about overstepping a legal tradition that has its roots in the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878. The statute was a response to post-Civil War abuses by occupation troops in the South during Reconstruction. The law prohibits Army involvement in domestic arrests or searches and seizures, a ban since extended to the other services."

Military units are involved, however. Active duty forces are complemented by thousands of National Guard troops, who have become the hidden support strut inside federal law enforcement. Unless called to federal duty, the National Guard is not covered by Posse Comitatus and has more latitude in undertaking law enforcement missions.

The Guard inspects cargo for U.S. Customs, analyzes intelligence for the FBI and translates wiretap intercepts for the Drug Enforcement Administration. The Guard now has more personnel assigned to counter-drug activities than the DEA has special agents on duty, according to Col. David Friestad, the Guard's counter-drug coordinator.

Lawrence J. Korb, an assistant secretary of defense during the Reagan administration, argues that the open-ended nature of the military's commitment is the greatest potential hazard. "It should [have been] a temporary stopgap," Korb said, "but it's been institutionalized." Moreover, there is new pressure to extend the military's domestic role to counterterrorism. During the Olympics last summer, a Marine Corps chemical, biological and nuclear warfare response team was deployed to Atlanta. FBI Director Louis J. Freeh recently urged Congress "to take that infrastructure, which was specific to the Olympics, and expand it into a much larger framework."

Congress appropriated \$350 million for the Defense Department to begin training state and local authorities against such threats. Even early enthusiasts for a vigorous military role in the drug war, such as Jon R. Thomas, former assistant secretary of state for international narcotics matters, are uneasy about the drift. "Where does it stop?" Thomas said. "Posse Comitatus was a real smart idea. It was basically saying, look, we don't want the military with police power."



US Customs officers are working alongside the National Guard to fight cocaine trafficking. PHOTOGRAPH BY RICK BOWMER

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ica is dwarfed by that from Southeast Asia, which produces 60 percent of the world's opium. Of that, the CIA figures show, 92 percent comes from Burma, the world's biggest producer. Based largely on satellite reconnaissance of the areas under cultivation, agency estimates put Burma's 1996 opium production at 2,500 metric tons and rising.

The increase in Burmese opium production in recent years coincides with the takeover in Burma of the State Law and Order Restoration Council, a military junta known as SLORC.

"The jury is still out on how much SLORC is involved in drug production," McCaffrey said. "But we can say that the drug production is up, not down." He said the junta's "dismal" human rights record is an obstacle to U.S. cooperation in trying to reduce opium cultivation, which is carried out largely by hill tribes in remote parts of the country.

How Drugs Sucked In The Army

FOR MORE than 20 years, enthusiasm for flinging the military into the drug war has ebbed and flowed in Washington, writes **Jim McGee**. In the late 1970s, the Carter administration provided military assistance to source countries, such as Mexico, to help eradicate marijuana fields, but left in place strict prohibitions against more overt military involvement.

President Ronald Reagan, faced with a burgeoning cocaine trade, first mustered the Pentagon for the drug war in 1981 by declaring international drug trafficking a threat to national security and assigning his vice president, George Bush, to head a drug task force that advocated extensive use of military assets.

The military's role grew slowly, however, constrained by the Pentagon's discomfit with the new mission and modest funding from Congress.

But in 1989 the concept gained new traction. President Bush ordered the Pentagon to participate vigorously in the drug war and Congress more than doubled the Defense Department's counter-drug appropriation, from \$200 million in 1988 to \$438 million in 1989. For fiscal 1997, Congress appropriated \$947 million, a 16 percent increase over the previous year.

Initially, the Pentagon favored a massive deployment of radar ships and Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) planes to set up a virtual blockade in the Gulf of Mexico. The operation led to some large seizures, but proved expensive and had little impact on the availability of cocaine in U.S. cities.

Concluding that such massive interdiction was fruitless, President Clinton ordered a shift of military counter-drug assets from transit lanes to source countries.

This approach fostered a new network of interagency task forces, such as the one occupying a new \$13.5 million command center in Key West, Florida, which put military officers in seats next to federal agents. The modified strategy has resulted in thousands of pilots, soldiers and military commanders cross-training in a civilian law enforcement specialty that is increasingly viewed as a permanent part of the Pentagon's job.

Such integration has occurred on a scale both small and large. In Utah, 125 soldiers work to translate telephone conversations, often on Colombian, Mexican or Nigerian suspects. And at the investigative center in Greenbelt, Maryland, military intelligence officers assemble files on drug gangs in Baltimore and analyze financial transactions by suspects in Fairfax County.

"Once the military was told by the Congress and the president that this was part of their mission," James X. Dempsey said, "then they were institutionally bound to make it permanent and pervasive."

David Cornwell adopted the name John Le Carré so long ago he now says he can no longer recall why he chose it. He has come to this swank room in the Carlyle Hotel, New York, grudgingly, as he always does. He hates interviews, hates hearing himself talk about himself, hates giving up an air of mystery. "This is positively my last appearance," he says. He has said this before.

New Horizons for Cold War Warrior

Critics who wrote off John Le Carré after the fall of communism have found the master plotter is still one step ahead, writes **David Streitfeld**

A FEW years ago, a fan sent John Le Carré a gift. It was a paperback copy of his most famous novel, *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*. This would have been a pointless exercise, but stamped inside was the original owner's name: Aldrich Ames.

The novelist kept the book, although with mixed feelings. "I found it a little bit dirty, a bit creepy," he says. "Like having someone break into your bedroom."

The most notorious American spy since the Rosenbergs was, it seems, a big fan of England's most famous spy novelist. Ames's library, sold after his arrest, included the writer's Smiley trilogy, which is about the pursuit of deep-penetration agents known as moles. A mole, of course, is exactly what Ames so devastatingly was.

The conventional view of Ames is that he betrayed the CIA and sent men to their deaths for money. But Le Carré believes that, in the end, "as traitors and some criminals do, Ames was having a dialogue with God. 'If I do this, will I be caught? Do you still love me if I do that?'"

Ames ultimately broke all the rules of discretion, putting down a half-million in cash for a mortgage, buying a \$50,000 white Jaguar and so on. "That was really an invitation to his maker to lose patience. He knew the stuff. He knew how they find people." He knew from his Le Carré, if nothing else.

But if Ames misread Le Carré, so did the critics who tried in the early '90s to put the novelist on the shelf, saying that the end of the Cold War made him as relevant as a writer about pirates. Instead, Le Carré nimbly shifted gears, secretly glad to have a new topic.

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The mere fact that communism didn't work doesn't mean that capitalism does. In many parts of the globe it's a wrecking, terrible force, displacing people, ruining lifestyles, traditions, ecologies and stable systems with the same ruthlessness as communism.

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For Le Carré, fluency has provided wealth and fame. Harry Pendel isn't nearly so fortunate, and in his comic downfall is a trace of there-but-for-the-grace-of-God. The novelist confesses: "I'm punishing myself."

The odd thing is, he's so good at talking, particularly in public. It's the fluency. Two nights before at the 92nd Street Y, he was in adequate form, which is to say as good as anyone in the novel-writing business. Last year in San Francisco he was superb. Ditto North Carolina in '92. Proof of his verbal talents can be found on the many audiotapes he has made of his work: They're done so skillfully that you aren't aware of the narration, just of the story. This is the way fiction should be, and rarely is.

He says he is not the life of the party, despite reports to the contrary. Downright dull, he claims. Being entertaining in person would take energy away from being entertaining in print and, at age 65 with maybe a decade of novel-writing left, who would want that? "I go to bed at 9 o'clock. I don't give the fluency away."

In *The Tailor of Panama*, Harry Pendel does just that, if rather unwillingly. Harry is recruited as a spy for the British. "We're reopening Panama," he's told. The canal, due to be surrendered by the United States on December 31, 1999, is up for grabs. Where there's intrigue, there's a need for information. And in a small country like Panama, one very expensive tailor can get confided in a lot. A wife who works for a high official in the Canal Commission is a bonus. Harry does come up with some great information, mainly by cooking minor facts into elaborate confessions. The revolutionaries want the canal. The revolutionaries are stirring. Certain officials are secretly corrupt. Harry's controller is thrilled by this bonanza. So are the controller's bosses, who add their own spin. In short, this is a novel about self-deceit.

It happens all the time in the intelligence business. "I would love to know what the CIA has spent on fabricated information," Le Carré says. "Over the last 25 years, it must be half the national debt."

The fibbing and faking are getting worse. "As the systems for propagating information and speeding it around the globe are becoming ever more sophisticated, so do the opportunities to manipulate information." Le Carré pauses to decry what he variously terms "political correctness or sound bites or family values," the notion "of only one correct attitude to any one problem." He means things like the U.S. invasions of Panama and Grenada, the Persian Gulf War. "The manipulation of truth seems to go hand-in-hand with the availability of information."

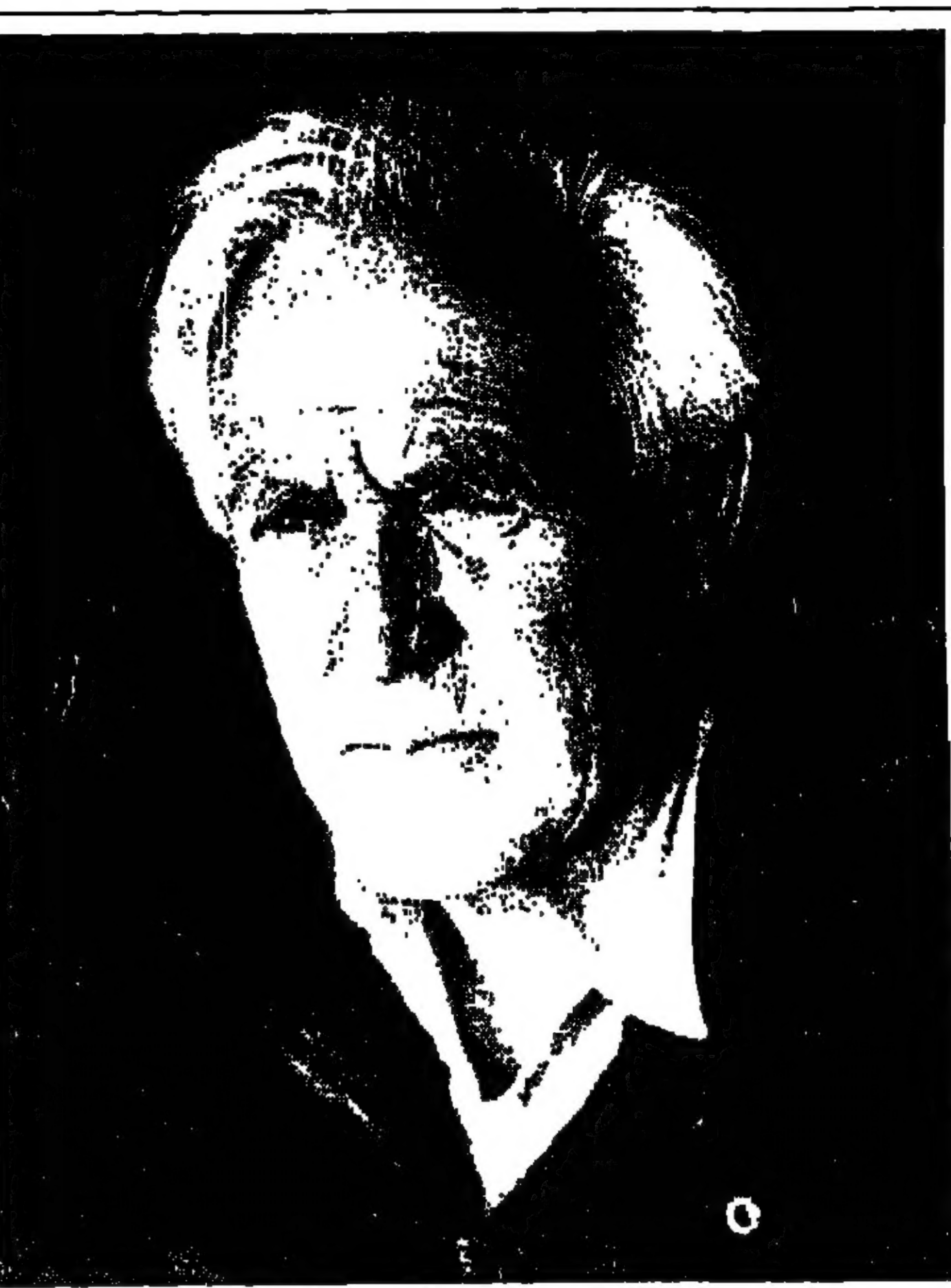
In *Tailor* the corruption, the misstatements and distortion go all the way up the government and journalistic ladders. "Everyone is using truth as his whore," getting it to do whatever he wants. This is a novel that uses comedy to make the tragedy more palatable.

"Corruption," he believes, "really can destroy to this extent. One reason why we think that life is good in America is that most of people who are describing life, the articulate people, are on the gray end. The people who can't speak for themselves, the inarticulate who grow in numbers every day, have no proper spokespeople."

There's a break in Le Carré's work after *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*, his seventh novel, published in 1974. All the books until then had been set in Europe, a setting he had grown weary of. "I decided I was sitting on my ass too much. I selected education spots." Southeast Asia was first; he became the endgame in Vietnam. "I became, shamefully or otherwise, a war tourist of a sort."

The result was *The Honourable Schoolboy*, one of his best books. After the Cold War, there were two epilogues, *The Russia House* and *The Secret Pilgrim*. But then, in *The Night Manager*, he turned to the arms and narcotics trades. In *Our Game* it was the fragmentation of the former Soviet empire. Now Panama, a place that has slipped below American radar even though no one knows what will result when the canal is turned over. Le Carré's publisher hoped that the canal would become a late-blooming issue in the presidential campaign, but no such luck. Maybe the Republicans will get their game together in time for the paperback.

Le Carré made five visits to the country, each of two to three weeks. He would meet someone who would introduce him to someone who would introduce him to someone else. Soon he ended up knowing what his characters knew and seeing all they saw. This sort of hands-on research is vital for Le Carré: He speaks of pretending he is one of his characters. The fluency comes naturally, but not without work.



Le Carré... created the modern concept of the secret agent

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In the novel, the most sympathetic characters are the Panamanians. Le Carré's recent article in the *New York Times Magazine*, "Que! Panama!," had a bit more of an edge, including lines like "Everybody knows that in Panama even the best of men find it hard to get rich without a little white powder sticking to their fingers."

The new Panamanian ambassador to the United States, who became a friend of Le Carré's during the novelist's Panamanian visits, felt he had to protest. In a letter to the magazine, Eduardo Morgan gently tweaked the writer: "I am aware that novelists live in a world beyond reality. For that reason I am not surprised to learn in this case his keen sense for 'cloak and dagger' ambiance should spill over from his fiction to his perception of facts."

Most novelists borrow from the real world to create their imaginary landscapes. A lucky few find that the world returns the favor, taking the writer's concepts or phrases and introducing them to common usage. Vladimir Nabokov coined the term "nymphet" and gave a certain spin to the name Lolita, and now they're both stock expressions for a certain type of girl. Mario Puzo made the Mafia glamorous; without Puzo, John Gotti would have just been a run-of-the-mill hood.

Le Carré created the modern concept of the secret agent: rumpled, beset by trouble and betrayal, yet secretly powerful. "He changed the image of the spy from a glamorous figure to a bureaucrat, which is closer to the truth," says David Wise, who has written widely on espionage. "The CIA is a bureaucracy. One reason it took so long to catch Ames was precisely for bureaucratic reasons. You're reluctant to suspect someone who is a member of the club."

The novelist has gotten a good return out of what he calls "my little university," his seven or eight years as a spy himself during the late '50s and early '60s. It's been an infinitely adaptable setting. The only one of his 14 novels not to use the secret world as a backdrop was *The Naive and Sentimental Lover* in 1971. A fictional rendering of an intense emotional relationship Le Carré had with another couple — the novelist James Kennaway and his wife, Susan — that novel was merely the writer spying on his own life.

For years, the novelist has protested that he doesn't know much about the real world of spies, and for years no one has believed him. The spell cast by the novels is so effective that in the early 1990s East German spy master Markus Wolf was repeatedly identified in news accounts as Le Carré's model for the Soviet spy chief Karla. Le Carré says he hadn't even heard of Wolf when he invented Karla, and rejects the German's latter-day attempts to whitewash his actions, calling him "the modern equivalent of Albert Steiner... a nasty little twerp." Still, the myth persists.

"Of course, it's fun in a way to have one's fantasies taken for real," he says. Only in a way, though. "There is a kind of guilt in me which my character Harry ought to be feeling. It's a feeling that has perennially haunted writers... the sinfulness, the corrosive eye that the writer brings to stuff. Graham Greene talked about the chip of ice." Greene, Le Carré's only competitor for the title of best spy writer of the century, weighs on the younger man's mind these days. *The Tailor of Panama* is an acknowledged homage to the late master's *Our Man in Havana*. Le Carré is now moving into the age when Greene wrote his lesser books. He has mentioned before that it would have been a good idea if someone had told Greene not to publish a few of those. Le Carré vows, "I will not end up as an old man struggling to keep up his literary reputation." When the fluency is gone, he says, he's sure to know.

His father had an abundant supply to the end. He was always promoting nonexistent deals, which landed him in the slammer more than once. The writer's mother fled early, with a real estate agent who was himself married. She didn't take the two boys because she feared her husband would then come after her.

Recipe for a horrible childhood: "Boarding school, holiday school, foster parents, proxy mothers for a holiday or a few weeks at a time, constant changing of women until he married one stepmother, then another stepmother. Masses of women running concurrently and consecutively."

It's surprising he didn't fly apart, become a spy only to become a traitor. "There could have been a time when, properly spoken to, I could have been seduced into rebellion," he tells the audience at the Y.

Instead of anger, Le Carré was driven by an eagerness to please. "I became an entertainer. Go on, David, tell the one about so-and-so, I loved to imitate people."

But if this was the birth of the fluency, it also was the origin of his ambivalence. "Being a novelist means training your brain to work a certain way; after a time it can't be helped, or stopped. He mentions the French term for it: *déformation professionnelle*. It sounds like a disease, an inherited one perhaps."

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Worldwide Heroin Production Soars

WILLIAM BRANIGAN
FUELED by expanding drug trafficking rings and intellectual or corrupt governments, the world's production of opium has risen dramatically in recent years and is pushing up addiction rates for heroin, according to the U.S. drug policy chief.

Barry R. McCaffrey, a retired general who heads the White House Office of Drug Control Policy, recently expressed alarm about the increases after returning from a trip to Southeast Asia that overlapped President Clinton's visit to Thailand. McCaffrey visited the "Golden Triangle," which spans the borders of Burma, Thailand and Laos and produces most of the world's opium, the narcotic from which heroin is derived.

Global opium production has doubled since 1988 and is now about 4,000 metric tons a year, according to estimates compiled by the CIA and cited by McCaffrey. It takes about 10 tons of opium to make one ton of heroin, drug experts say.

"This massive commodity production is looking for a marketplace," and its greatest impact is likely to be in the regions where opium poppies are grown, McCaffrey said. He said drug trafficking and addiction are up sharply in China, notably near the Golden Triangle, and in Pakistan, which borders the world's second-largest opium producer, Afghanistan.

At the same time, international drug trafficking organizations — among them Nigerian, Chinese, Colombian and Mexican rings —

are "aggressively" marketing heroin in the United States and Europe. As cocaine use has fallen in the United States in recent years, Colombian gangs in particular have sought to peddle heroin to try to keep their share of the U.S. narcotics market.

The United States currently has about 800,000 addicts, only 2 percent of the world's total, but "we're seeing some disturbing trends among young people," McCaffrey said.

Opium production in Colombia has risen from virtually nothing a few years ago to 65 metric tons last year, surpassing Mexico, according to the CIA figures. Together, the two countries now produce more than enough heroin to meet current U.S. demand of about 10 metric tons a year, McCaffrey said. Still, the output from Latin Amer-

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICK BOWMER

New Horizons for Cold War Warrior

Critics who wrote off John Le Carré after the fall of communism have found the master plotter is still one step ahead, writes **David Streitfeld**

A FEW years ago, a fan sent John Le Carré a gift. It was a paperback copy of his most famous novel, *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*. This would have been a pointless exercise, but stamped inside was the original owner's name: Aldrich Ames.

The novelist kept the book, although with mixed feelings. "I found it a little bit dirty, a bit creepy," he says. "Like having someone break into your bedroom."

The most notorious American spy since the Rosenbergs was, it seems, a big fan of England's most famous spy novelist. Ames's library, sold after his arrest, included the writer's Smiley trilogy, which is about the pursuit of deep-penetration agents known as moles. A mole, of course, is exactly what Ames so devastatingly was.

The conventional view of Ames is that he betrayed the CIA and sent men to their deaths for money. But Le Carré believes that, in the end, "as traitors and some criminals do, Ames was having a dialogue with God. 'If I do this, will I be caught? Do you still love me if I do that?'"

Ames ultimately broke all the rules of discretion, putting down a half-million in cash for a mortgage, buying a \$50,000 white Jaguar and so on. "That was really an invitation to his maker to lose patience. He knew the stuff. He knew how they find people." He knew from his Le Carré, if nothing else.

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David Cornwell adopted the name John Le Carré so long ago he now says he can no longer recall why he chose it. He has come to this swank room in the Carlyle Hotel, New York, grudgingly, as he always does. He hates interviews, hates hearing himself talk about himself, hates giving up an air of mystery. "This is positively my last appearance," he says. He has said this before.

The odd thing is, he's so good at talking, particularly in public. It's the fluency. Two nights before at the 92nd Street Y, he was in adequate form, which is to say as good as anyone in the novel-writing business. Last year in San Francisco he was superb. Ditto North Carolina in '92. Proof of his verbal talents can be found on the many audiotapes he has made of his work: They're done so skillfully that you aren't aware of the narration, just of the story. This is the way fiction should be, and rarely is.

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Virtual understanding

British and Australian schools are to trade world views on the Internet, writes **David O'Reilly**

A PLAN to use the Internet to reforge cultural links with Australia may have big spin-off benefits for British schools. As part of a campaign called New Images, the whole of 1997 is being set aside for a two-way exchange of cultural activities between Britain and Australia, involving everyone from poets to astronomers.

New Images was devised by the British Council after former Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd grew concerned during a visit to Australia in the early 1980s that views of Britain were locked into stereotypes about Beefeaters and historic buildings.

British and Australian officials decided to try to showcase each country to the other as contemporary, innovative and hi-tech places. The Internet is to play a key role in the campaign, which will begin with a satellite-linked launch in February.

Children in hundreds of schools in both countries are to be given the chance to work up collaborations via the Internet. Already there is a plan for primary school children in London to link with schools in Brisbane to create drawings and stories about each other. Schools in Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire will link with high school children in outback Northern Queensland to create a "virtual tour" of their local areas, and schools in Northern Ireland are planning similar tie-ups with some in Western Australia.

The finished projects will be published on the Net during 1997 as prototypes for other schools to adapt.

Thousands of Web surfers in both countries will be asked to contribute to an opinion poll designed to collect up-to-date information about the attitudes of each country to the other. The survey will be posted on the Web in January, allowing the British Council to draw off data over the next few years to determine the impact of the New Images programme.

"There are some cleverly opened-ended questions and the themes are across the board, from things like Britain's trading relations to where people look for style," says David Blagborough, British Council head of business relations. "What does the weather do to people's state of mind? What would living in the other country be like? The survey will ask people to discuss propositions like: all Australian men are macho, all British men are wimps. There will be an attempt to plug into humour about one another, classic British/Australian jokes."

"We make assumptions about the perceptions. Our assumption is that people in Australia think of Britain as being regal theme parks and cream teas and the crown jewels. And likewise here, there is an assumption that Australia is Neighbours, Dame Edna and beaches. Those are the assumptions and they may well be untrue. But if they are, New Images is about trying to change them," Mr Blagborough said.

The survey could also become the prototype for ventures to test cultural ties elsewhere in the world.



Some of the euro notes unveiled in Dublin this month

A pocket full of euros

CITY OF WORDS
John Ryle

THE NAME has no mojo; the designs for the notes are nondescript. Yet I'm sure we'll all get used to the aura of the euro. We coped with decimalisation, with the loss of shillings and pence, of farthings and florins, of guineas and groats. So why not the pound sterling? We may even find some novel use for that keyboard curiosity, the £ symbol. Recall that the curly L denotes, by origin, the first unit of an old imperial currency, the *libra*, *solidi* and *denarii* of ancient Rome: this is not the first time Britain's money supply has been controlled from outside the country.

Perhaps it would have been a better idea to draw on these Latin terms in the search for a new European currency, rather than lopping a syllable off the name of Zeus's paramour. Or, if euros they must be, to give them mythological weight with an engraving of Europa's abduction by Zeus, rather than the dull maps and bridges on the published de-

sign. (The French are good at this: their bank notes are the prettiest there are. If the Germans must run the fiscal side, let the French do the design.) But it's too late now. As with so much else in the European Union, the decisions seem to have been taken without any public discussion. The euro it is, at least until someone invents a nickname for it. (Suggestions on a bank note, please, of any denomination.)

As I say, euros are something I could get used to — if I had enough of them. And it seems that the European Monetary Institute expects us to be rich: the lowest denomination unveiled at the Dublin summit earlier this month was a five-euro note, while the highest was 500, which is likely to be the equivalent of between £300 and £400 — more money than most people see in a week.

The euro, we are told, will save us from inflation, because German bankers hate inflation more than anything. And it's true that the most important thing about a currency is that it should keep its value. Those who have lived in countries suffer-

ing from hyperinflation know the heart-sinking feeling of waking up and realising what you have is worth 5 per cent less than it was yesterday: savings dwindle to nothing; dreams turn to ashes. The last country in Europe to experience such freefall was Germany in the twenties. It's no wonder the Bundesbank is obsessed with keeping inflation down.

When I was in Uganda a few years ago, the local shilling had been reduced to a value of less than one-tenth of a US cent. If you wanted to know how much money you had, you weighed it. On a journey to the north of the country I travelled with several kilograms of Ugandan shillings to buy fuel and food: 1,000-shilling notes in bundles of 500 packed in an attaché-case, like the proceeds of a drug deal.

In northern Uganda, an area suffering severely from the privations of civil war, I found myself discussing inflation with a farmer. I had heard it was like this in Germany in the twenties, I said: money was worth so little that housewives went to market with wheelbarrows full of banknotes in order to buy bread. He thought about this a bit. Then he said, "And where did they get the wheelbarrows?" Another Ugandan told me that he had been trying to buy a car, but couldn't carry the money. He had to hire a taxi to carry the cash from the bank to the vendor's place. It took them all day to count it.

But the euro is hard currency and the Ugandan shilling is soft. In the end, what matters is whether your money is convertible or not. The shilling is local; it belongs, at best in the national bank, but the euro belongs with dollars and yen, beyond state borders, in the lucrosphere.

Big game, big bucks

Liz McGregor

TO PARAPHRASE Mao, money flows from the barrel of a gun: in the new South Africa, vast tracts of land are being created for foreign sportsmen happy to cough up thousands of dollars to sleep in a rough reed hut and wash in a stream, provided they can go home with a trophy to stick up on the wall.

It's all down to economics. Although foreign tourists are pouring in at the rate of a million a year, not all of them are content to shoot wildlife with a camera. There is, as South African farmers are finding out, big money in hunting as well. About 9 per cent of land in South Africa is now given over to wildlife. Roughly half of that is state parks; the rest is private land, much of it used for hunting and game ranching — the breeding of wild animals for the hunter's bullet.

There are passionate arguments both for and against this, but in Africa, harshness of conditions, it is the most pragmatic that prevails. In a country that can barely afford to feed its human population, wildlife has to pay its way.

Conservation Corporation Africa (CCA), a private game consortium into which Hambros Bank and the Getty family have pumped millions of pounds, dominates the market. It bought a string of failing cattle farms in KwaZulu, built glassed-in tree houses in the only remaining indigenous forest, restocked the place with wild animals and waited for the money to pour in.

There were setbacks: a lion dined on a guest who had slipped away from the dinner table to fetch her jumper, and civil war broke out between Inkatha and the ANC.

Phinda, as the park is called, is surrounded by hunting and game-ranching farms. The general manager, Les Carlisle, defends hunting.

"Take rhinos, they're slow breeders and produce only once every four years. If I have an old male, past his prime, with his ribs showing, either I let him die in the wild or I let some German shoot him for \$50,000 and I can buy three more at \$50,000 each."

Harold Braak, who grew up in the Kruger National Park and is now the chief warden in Skukuza Camp, agrees that hunting and game ranching create more space and ensure a greater diversity in the animal gene pool. He does not allow hunting in the Kruger, but other state parks fence off areas for trophy hunting — it helps to pay the park's bills.

A white rhino hunt is no gladiatorial contest between man and beast. "It's like shooting a cow," said one hunter. "They're very short-sighted and can't see you coming; if you stay out of the direction of the wind, they can't smell you either. One shot through the ear and it's over." For this, the client would part with \$30,000.

There are about 400 professional hunters in South Africa. Each year, they hire their services to some 4,000 foreign and 50,000 local hunters.

But it was in the Great Rift Valley that man's ancestors first stood up four million years ago. There is a theory that deep in our unconscious lies a memory of this period when we lived among wild animals in paradise. That is why wildernesses must be maintained — not just for animals, but for humans as well.



The rich delta beneath the burning Kalahari sun is a threatened paradise for animal and plant life

PHOTOGRAPH BY: ROBERT AND SILVIE BERGEROTT

African garden of Eden on edge of disaster

Ruaridh Nicoll in Botswana finds the 'great oasis' of the Okavango in peril of drying up to satisfy human needs

PUSHING gently at the stream's sandy floor, Worm eases his canoe through the thick reeds that border the banks of the Boro. He stops to point to a distant line of trees that used to mark the banks of a great river and then, as if to prove a point, he knocks past a wrecked canoe that has become wedged across the channel's new breadth.

The sweltering silence is broken by an elephant, a little to the left, which rips at branches, feeding itself lethargically with its trunk.

Downriver, the water ends in a large pool where hippos congregate. Worm treats the place with respect; he believes a huge snake lives in its depths drinking the river dry. Around about, the land lies lazily like pottery glazing in a kiln, creatures emerging and departing on hazy, washed-out backgrounds. Overhead the Kalahari sun burns deep, claiming the once great waters of the Okavango back for itself. Quietly, Worm says that he has never seen the water so low; that he fears for his job.

Eighty or so kilometres to the south, Dr Karen Ross, holding her straw hat down against the grey dust wind, leaves her office. She has just seen a letter published in one of Botswana's national newspapers accusing her of spreading "the sort of careless propaganda that may encourage green activists to take up arms, go ballistic or even ignite the water bomb waiting to explode on [Botswana's] northern border".

Ross, head of Conservation International's Okavango project, is angry. Beyond her a Cessna lifts off from Maun's runway. It banks and heads north, ferrying tourists to the camps in the delta beyond.

The greatest oasis on the planet, the Okavango supports 164 species of mammals, 540 types of bird and enough plants, fish, insects and amphibians to employ David Attenborough for a lifetime. Larger than Wales, the delta is the shattered remains of a river which empties into the Kalahari, a river which winds through Namibia from its source in the Angolan heights.

On its way it passes a place called Rundu where Botswana's neighbouring state of Namibia plans to

draw off water in an effort to quench the drought that threatens its capital city.

Wudhoek's reservoirs have fallen to 10 per cent of capacity; nearly 40,000 livestock have died so far. The only answer, the Namibians say, is to build a 250km pipeline from the Okavango river. "If we don't build the pipeline and the rains fall again..." says Peter Heyns, the senior Namibian water engineer. "To put it bluntly, we'll be in the shit."

Many of the residents of Maun, not least Ross, are deeply concerned by this plan. They themselves are suffering badly from the lack of water. For the first time in memory the river did not reach the town during the annual flood. Much of the town's water is drawn from boreholes, but now the water table is dropping fast.

Ross sees the pipeline as not only unimaginative but also a dangerous precedent. And she is not alone. For the white population of the area, demanding responsibility from the Namibians is a matter of saving the delta. For the black communities, it means saving themselves.

Kehemetswe Sazo sits on an animal skin chair in the shade of his rondavel in Ditshipi, a village in the heart of the delta itself. His clothes are stone-washed by the abrasive Kalahari sands and his face looks weary. "If the water dries up it will be the end of our lives," he says quietly. "All the things of our lives are solely dependent on it."

The Okavango problem is a precursor of things to come. As peace comes to the whole southern African region and development booms, rivers are being used to their maximum. South Africa itself expects to run out of fresh water in the first quarter of the next century

and its engineers are already looking north.

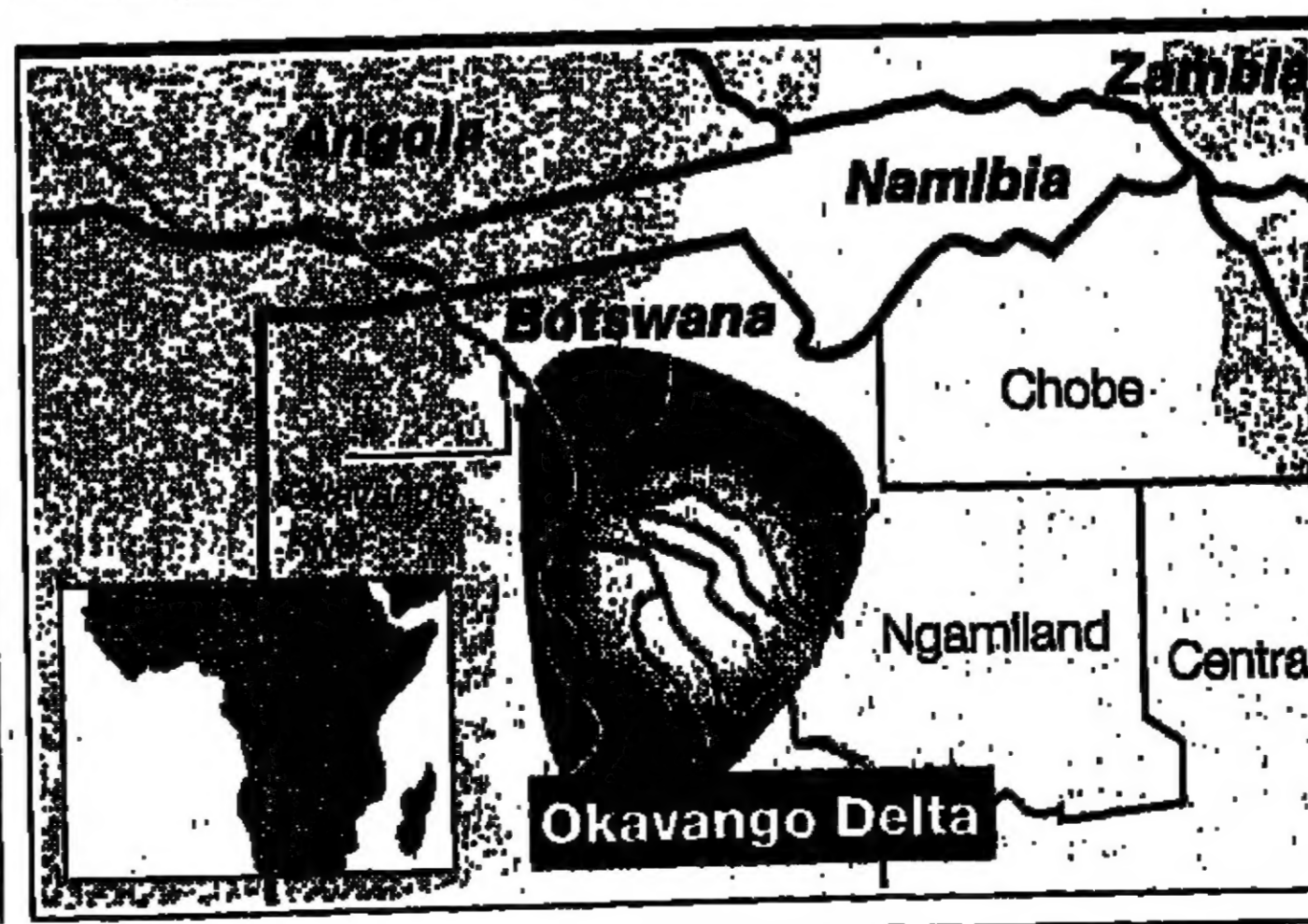
The various governments are signing deals to avoid the inevitable confrontations. The Okavango, however, is different: it is unique and development could cost the world, and more importantly Botswana, one of its greatest natural assets.

When the Namibian team flew to Maun to pacify the residents, Heyns found himself facing the white population, a mish-mash of safari operators, hunters and frontier fotsam. He argued that the Namibian pipeline would extract only a small percentage of the Okavango's water and that, given the situation, he had no choice but to go ahead.

He pointed out that it is war-torn Angola that the people of the delta needed to worry about. There was one man notably absent from the meeting: Peter Smith, the author of the letter to Ross. Smith knows more about the water of the delta than any other living soul.

SITTING on his porch, set in a 12-acre plot on the edge of the dry bed of yet another offshoot of the Okavango river, he explains why he agrees with Heyns. "Angola is still in a very poor state, but this is where the greatest threat to the delta lies. Once the country becomes peaceful, people will start settling beside the river. You can't tell them, 'OK, you can live there, but don't drink any water.'"

Both Smith and Heyns make pessimistic noises about the delta's future. "The delta's going to shrink," says Smith. "In the past we have never had it so good, but people don't realise those days have gone." In Maun that view is not acceptable. The whites, many of whom have spent more than a decade building up businesses, know they



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Letter from Bermuda Elizabeth Jones

To the glory of blinkered belief

NOVEMBER 17, 1996, Bermuda's Cobb's Hill Methodist Church held its anniversary service exactly 169 years after it was completed and dedicated.

to listening and worshipping outside. In 1800, the Reverend John Stephenson, the first Wesleyan missionary to regularly preach in Bermuda, was fined £50 and imprisoned for six months because he had committed the "crime" of preaching to slaves and to "free men of colour".

What is remarkable is that Fraser was himself a slave. His missionary work attracted the notice of Esten, who in 1825 sold to the slaves a plot of land for 10 shillings so that their dream of a church could become reality.

Soul" and "The Storm is Passing Over", I felt comforted that faith and determination can transcend even the worst of sociological and political evils. Today, many Bermudians are descendants of the first black leaders and members of Cobb's Hill Church.

The United Church of Canada will accept homosexuals as ministers but Cobb's Hill will not. And if the preacher is to be believed, it will not welcome them as members of the congregation either.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

WHICH countries do not have any McDonald's?

MONGOLIA has no McDonald's. There are several possible reasons: Big Macs don't contain nearly enough grease and are too tender for Mongolian tastes.

UZBEKISTAN has Korean burgers, Turkish burgers and downright inedible burgers but as yet no McDonald's. And I don't believe that the company has branched out into Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan or Tajikistan either.



Here, there but not quite everywhere... McDonald's has reached Tiananmen Square but not Mongolia or Bermuda

BERMUDA has no McDonald's. However, therein lies a story worthy of Gilbert and Sullivan. Some 20 years ago, Kentucky Fried Chicken sneaked into Bermuda.

THERE is no McDonald's in Sri Lanka - is this paradise? - Alison Hilbourne, OSC, Sri Lanka

The listener identifies the wrong physical source of the voice through an illusion created by the ventriloquist. While the dummy or puppet is allegedly talking, the ventriloquist articulates speech without moving lips or jaw, and holds the mouth slightly open so that sound escapes yet movements are not readily visible.

THE CITY of Gary (Indiana) - but really part of the Chicago SMSA) existed long before Gary Cooper. Fort Gary (now Winnipeg) was Lord Selkirk's contribution to the Scottish migration to Canada.

I read that the name Gary derives entirely from the popularity of movie actor Gary Cooper in the 1940s and that, previously, there were no Garys in Britain.

THE HUMAN ear has two basic methods of locating the source of a sound. The first involves the difference in the time of arrival of the leading edge of a sound at the two ears.

THE VENTRILQUIST, what is "thrown" is not the ventriloquist's voice, but the listener's perception.

AMIE FERGUSON is a little out of date (December 10, India's first McDonald's opened in Delhi in October. It is the world's first beef-free McDonald's, I had a Maharaja Mac, made with lamb. - Nick Whitehead, Geneva, Switzerland

ANYONE cite a few idols of this century who are still above reproach? - Bob Hays, Ripponden, Halifax

KING Henry VII set up a court for the poor which charged no fees and gave free legal aid. Is this court still in existence; if not, when was it abolished, and can it be resurrected?

ARECENT report by the Japanese National Police Agency says that mobile phones caused 537 traffic accidents in Japan between July and September this year, resulting in five deaths and 754 injuries.

HOW can I become a gay icon? - Miss Francis, Walton on Thames, Surrey

SEYCHELLES, in the Indian Ocean, does not have a McDonald's. However, fortunately for returning expatriates, Gatwick airport does. - A J Tracy, Victoria, Seychelles

HOW many people has the mobile phone already killed on the road?

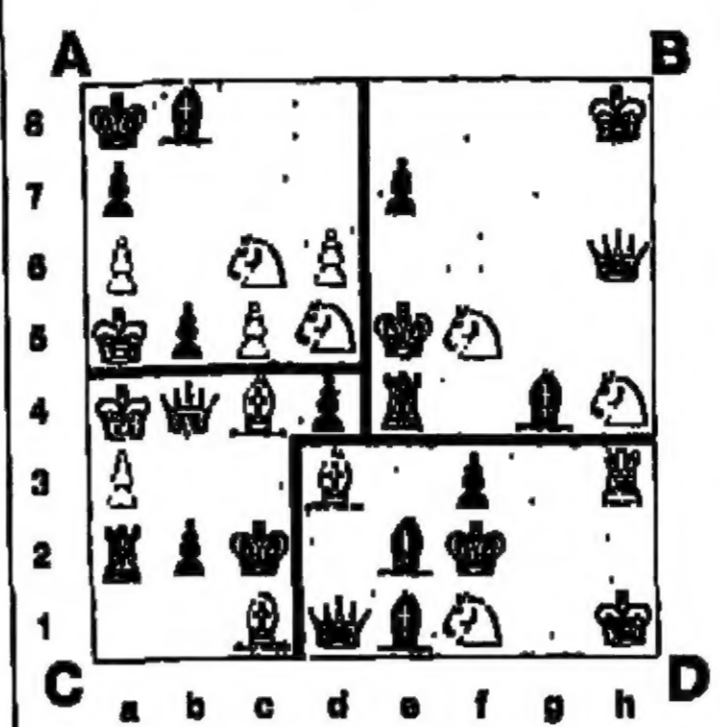
ARE VCRS available that skip the adverts?

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Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ.

Chess Leonard Barden

THE CHRISTMAS PUZZLE, created by Britain's best-ever composer, Conins Mansfield, was first published on December 25, 1914. It's really four problems in one, where the pieces may not be moved outside the boundaries shown by the black lines.



In each of the four problems, White "checkmates" as above in two moves, against any defence.

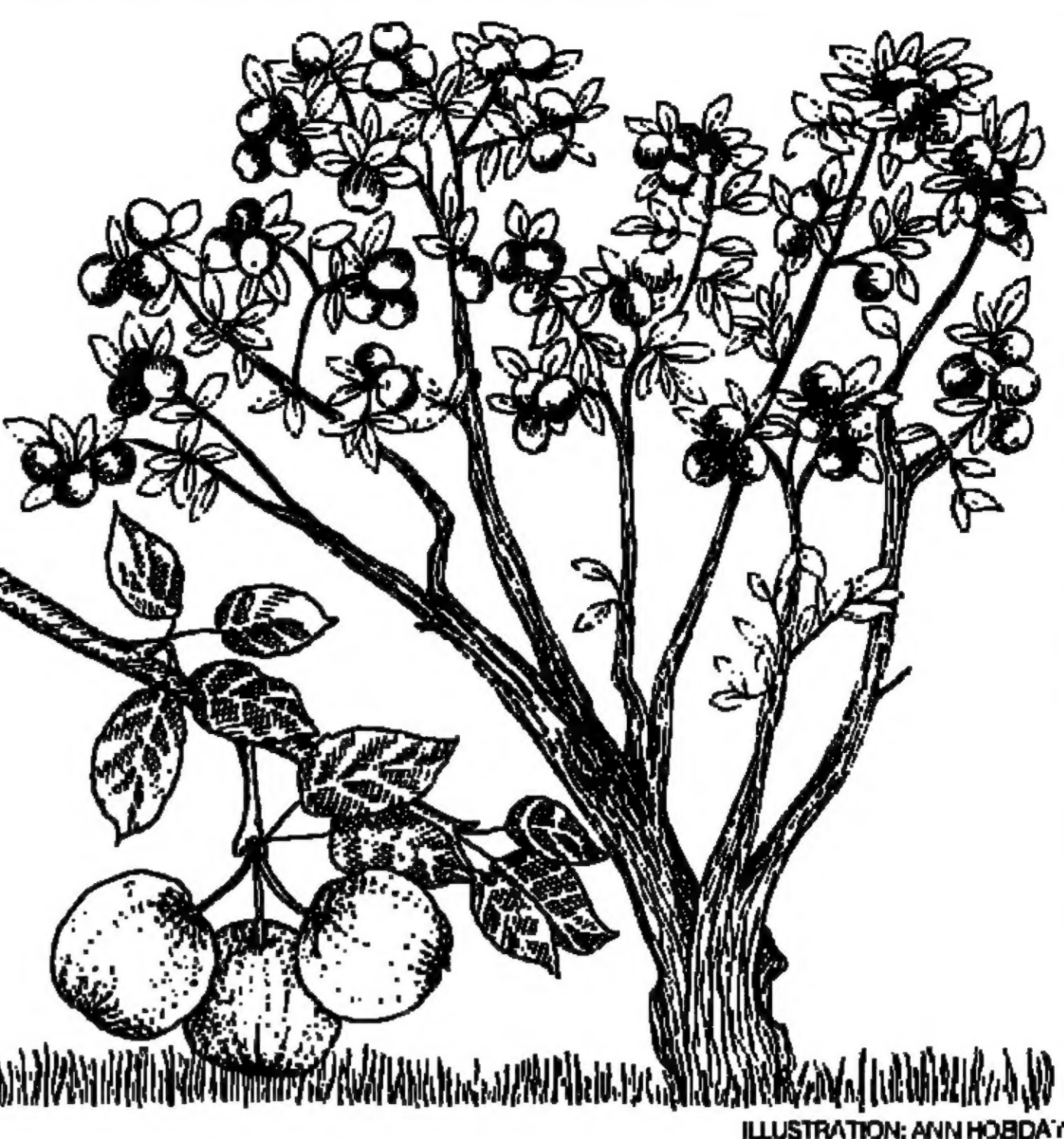
Send White's first moves for puzzles A, B, C and D to Christmas Chess, Weekend Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER to arrive by first post on Monday, January 27, 1997.

vide just the outline of Black's ideas, but you can explore it in more detail via the excellent GM Video release by consulting Centre Counter Carriage by IM Andrew Martin (screen time 75 minutes, £14.99, available from leading chess suppliers).

P Romilly v A Martin, Aberdeen 1991. 1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Nf6 3 c4 White can also try to keep the pawn by 3 Bb5+ Nbd7 4 e4, but then a6 5 Bx4 b5!

Send White's first moves for puzzles A, B, C and D to Christmas Chess, Weekend Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER to arrive by first post on Monday, January 27, 1997.

There are awards of £50, £30 and £20 for the first three correct solutions examined after the closing date, and the three winners will also each receive a London chess set from Tournament Chess Supplies (+44-170 765 9080).



Preserving core assets

AS I LOOK out from our upstairs window over the Norwich skyline - an urban jumble of domestic terraces, office blocks and occasional church towers - I find it hard to imagine its Tudor equivalent.

One could understand these developments if Britain were over-producing, or if the country were marginal for fruit cultivation. Yet we are now only 30 per cent self-sufficient in the production of apples and pears, and annually import more than 400,000 tonnes.

that more than 6,000 types of British apple have so far been identified. At one time a single orchard might contain 200 of these, while almost every parish had its own unique variety. In Gloucestershire, for example, there were 100 different types of perry pear.

Bridge Zia Mahmood

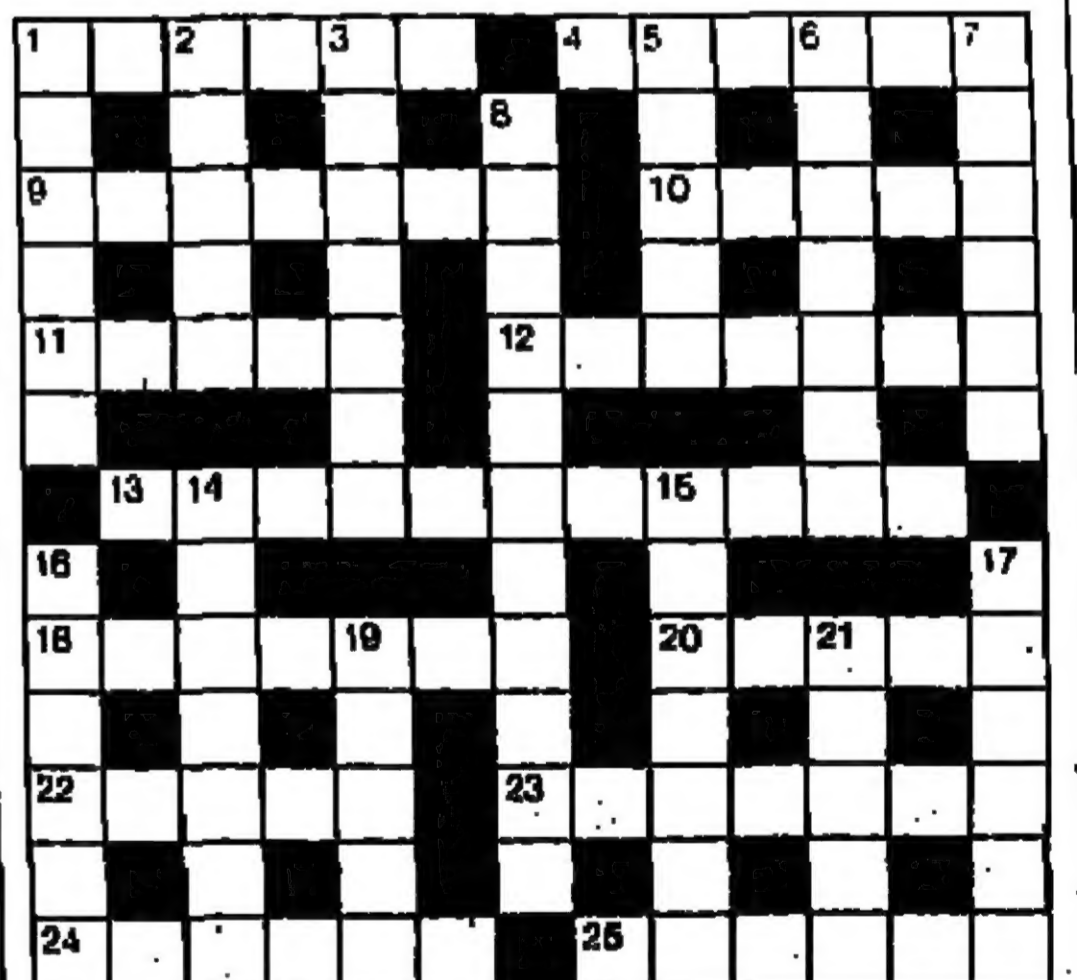
DECEMBER 25 is probably the only day of the year on which there isn't a bridge tournament going on somewhere in the world. I say probably because otherwise I will get a letter from the Much-Festering-under-Lyme Bridge Club telling me they've been holding a tournament on Christmas Day for the past 50 years.

four-card majors and a weak no-trump. You are South on each occasion, and the vulnerability is Love all.

PROBLEM 4 South West North East ♠ AKJ743 ♥ A32 ♦ AJ6 ♣ 4 Rank in order of preference: Double; 1♠; 2♠

Quick crossword no. 346

- Across 1 Rescind (6) 4 Project (6) 9 Judicious (7) 10 Fragrance (5) 11 Instruct (5) 12 Self-important (7) 13 Bell-ringing (11) 18 Stabilizer (7) 20 Stall (5) 22 Light boat (6) 23 Suite (7) 24 Sea song (6) 25 Span (6)



Last week's solution: 1 MEDICINE, 2 MODEL, 3 OIL, 4 OIL, 5 OIL, 6 OIL, 7 OIL, 8 OIL, 9 OIL, 10 OIL, 11 OIL, 12 OIL, 13 OIL, 14 OIL, 15 OIL, 16 OIL, 17 OIL, 18 OIL, 19 OIL, 20 OIL, 21 OIL, 22 OIL, 23 OIL, 24 OIL, 25 OIL.

Standing the test of time

Paul Evans

THE RUGGED, dark brown and russet walls wrap round with the smell of damp wood and rich mould. Chinks let in pale winter sunlight and the slow Sunday afternoon sounds of the village. Outside, low branches sway and their green-black needles whisper in the cold wind through the gravestones. On these boughs are plump scarlet berries which conceal a poisoned seed. Inside this huge, hollow trunk, a strangely peaceful darkness issues from the earth and it seems that the world grinds softly round this fixed dark point, this gateway to the underworld. Perhaps this is a forbidden place. This is the heart of a yew tree in Clavercy churchyard in Shropshire.

The tree, whose fruits show that it is female, is over 2,500 years old. Long before the church was built, in fact long before Christianity, she grew as the spiritual focus on a burial mound atop a red sandstone hill, as she does now. Because of the yew's incredible age, to the Celts it was the tree of life. Indeed, there are yew trees in Britain that are estimated to be over 5,000 years old: Whether in woods, churchyards, parks or gardens, the dark, mysterious old trees have a power which draws us to them, a power which bears witness to the death and rebirth of countless years.

The yew tree, *Taxus baccata*, is distributed throughout Europe, across North Africa, thorough what used to be called Asia Minor and along the Himalayas. The mysteries of many religions and cults surround these trees. In Northern Europe, at the midwinter festivals, a log of yew wood, the Yule log, was burned on ceremonial fires celebrating the death and rebirth of the year. From the burning Yule log came Yuletide, the winter solstice festival that became absorbed into Christmas.

According to a survey carried out in 1988, at least 500 churchyards in England and Wales have yew trees



ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LARKING

which are as old, and in some cases much older than the church itself. The distribution of these yews is concentrated in southeast and central England, Wales and the Lake District.

The favoured habitats of yew trees is on chalk or limestone soils, like the 500 year old grove on the chalk at Kingley Vales in Sussex.

Trees where growth rings can be counted are easy to age, and a yew tree of 12ft in girth is reckoned to be 300 years old. But in ancient trees, age is notoriously difficult to calculate because they are hollow. Research on the age of yew trees has changed radically thanks to the work of Alan Meredith who estimates that yews with a girth of 30ft are 2,400 years old. Those with a 33ft girth are 3,000 years old. By this measure, the 35ft trees at Delynog, Discoed and Llanfaredd churchyards in Powys are 4,500 years old. These trees provide an ar-

chaeological, ecological and spiritual link with prehistory, and pagan and Christian traditions.

If you can find an old yew tree and want to record it, measure the girth of the tree about 4ft above ground level by wrapping a piece of string around it and measuring the length of the string. Note the location with the grid reference if possible, naming the churchyard or place name and give any details of nearby archaeological sites like burial mounds etc, or any legends and stories that are attached to the tree or its place.

In September last year, David Bellamy launched the 'Yews for the Millennium' campaign which aims to take cuttings from 2,000-year-old trees and plant one in every parish in Britain.

For further information contact the Conservation Foundation, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR (telephone +44-171 823 8791)

Chess Leonard Barden

WHEN Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, the controversial president of the world chess body, Fide, made the huge gaffe of announcing that the Karpov-Kamsky title match would be played in Baghdad, with Saddam Hussein making the first move, few observers gave the 35-year-old Russian any chance of keeping his job at this autumn's election. Yet, in the event, he defeated his Brazilian challenger by a near 2-1 margin.

Ilyumzhinov really made a brilliant recovery. First, he hosted the Karpov v Kamsky series in his home town of Elista, where the organisation went well and the games were hard fought. Then he gave the veteran ex-champion Smyslov a pension, promised to stage the 1998 Olympiad in Kalmykia, and put his unpopular idea for an annual world championship with knock-out mini-matches on the back burner.

Just before the presidential vote, he produced two master strokes: a Karpov versus Kasparov world title reunification match for 1997 and a personal endorsement of his campaign for no less than Bobby Fischer, who wrote to wavering delegates that Ilyumzhinov was "a man of his word". Now safe for another term, Ilyumzhinov remains a hands-on Fide president and is learning from his mistakes. Last month, Elista again hosted the Russian championship, despite the fiasco of the 1994 tournament when the prize fund dropped by 12 per cent during play due to the collapse of the ruble. This time, prizes were in dollars, with \$12,000 for the winner plus a car, which Alex Khalifman drove back to St Petersburg.

Khalifman's best game was a sophisticated version of a novice theme. Beginners like to accept the Queen's Gambit pawn 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 and try to hold it by b5, a plan which fails, as

Black's does here, because White's fast piece development can exploit weaknesses on the Q-side and around the BK.

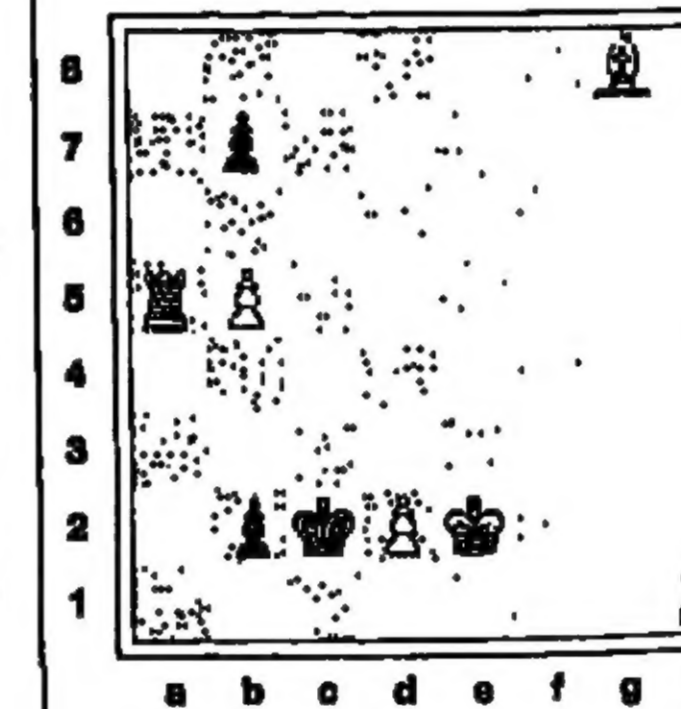
Khalifman v Sveshnikov

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 c6? Move order tricks are part of every master's armoury nowadays. Black is angling for the known system Nc3 Nf6 5 e3 Nbd7, but playing c6 before Nf6 is too inflexible.

4 g3! White switches to a promising form of the Catalan. Nf6 5 Bg2 dxc4? Be7, 0-0 and Nbd7 is solid if passive. Instead Black launches an ego-trip to justify 3...c6 6 0-0 b5 7 a4 Bb7 8 Ne5 Qb6? Qc8 is normal. 9 b3! cxd3 10 Qxb3 Nbd7 11 Be3 The threat d4-d5 opens up the centre and BK c5 12 Nxd7 Nxd7 13 d5! bxa4 14 Qxa4 exd5 15 Nc3 d4 16 Nd5 Bxd5 17 Bxd5 Rd8 18 Bf4 Qf6 Black can no longer resist. If Be7 19 Rb1 Qf6 20 Bc6 stops castling, while Bd6 19 Rb1 Qc7 20 Bb7 wins material.

19 Qb5 Bd6 20 Ra6 Rb8 21 Bb7 Bxd4 22 Rxd6 gxf6 23 gxf4 f5 24 Qc6 Bf8 25 Qd5 Kc7 26 Qd6 Resigns

No 2452



White mates in three moves, against any defence (by H Jansen).

No 2451: 1 Bd1 Kf5 2 Be2 Kf6 3 Ba6 Kf5 4 Bc8+ Kf6 5 Kd7 Kf5 6 Ke7 mate.

Cricket One-day International: Zimbabwe v England

England dither to a new low

David Hoppe in Bulawayo

ENGLAND have played Zimbabwe in four one-day internationals and have lost three. Sunday's two-wicket defeat here coming courtesy of about as vacillating a batting display as one could wish to witness — 152 all out on a pitch that might have inhibited strokeplay but which was reliable enough to have provided at least 200.

Zimbabwe can be quite a handy one-day side as England's captain Michael Atherton was careful to point out afterwards. So handy, in fact, that they had lost their last 10 one-day internationals, and had never beaten a Test nation when batting second in a limited-overs match.

England may have made a habit of losing in some strange places but they have rarely succumbed in such an easy-going atmosphere, where they had vocal support, where all the Zimbabweans in a crowd of 5,000 seemed to know each other. England did bowl with persistence and when Zimbabwe faltered at 107 for seven, they might have won.

But that was the cue for fortitude of a rather greater order. Alistair Campbell had demoted himself to No 7 after colliding with his teammate Guy Whittall during fielding practice. His right hand was heavily bruised and his cheek was scarred by Whittall's studs. But he batted judiciously and his unbeaten 32 ensured the match was won with more than six overs to spare — his first win as Zimbabwe's captain.

For the shot of the match, look no further than Eldo Brandes, the bely chicken farmer who embarrasses England as easily as cracking eggs. When Croft's off-spin lured Streak into driving a return catch, Zimbabwe were 16 runs short with two wickets remaining and the tension had reached its height. Brandes whacked his first ball over long



Down and out... Darren Gough is run out by Zimbabwe's wicket keeper, Andy Flower

PHOTOGRAPH: HOWARD BURFITT

off for six. That as good as settled it. Zimbabwe's top order had been held together by Waller, who made 48 until he was run out. Silverwood made a sound impression on his England debut, taking a wicket with his sixth ball when Grant Flower chopped on and then removing the elder Flower, Andy, to Knight's low catch at cover.

Atherton rationally opted to bowl out his three quicker bowlers. Gough's two wickets included the prize one of Houghton, who drove to extra cover, and Mullally's final spell brought two wickets in two balls. But Atherton eventually ran out of options. Croft's off-spin was withdrawn, after his first two overs cost 16, and Irani again looked vulnerable.

England's batting had looked comfortable enough to begin with but Streak's swing accounted for Knight and Stewart, at which point

Atherton embarked upon prolonged and distrustful reconnaissance, labouring 77 balls over 23. Then he had a leg-side mow at Grant Flower's slow left-arm and was caught at mid-on.

Thorpe, coming in at No 4 even though Hussain and Crawley are in better form, had his off-bail flicked aside by Brandes. Crawley briefly looked in trim before he advanced to Kenzie and drove a catch into the off-side. Only Hussain prospered, finishing unbeaten on 49, and even he could not have been entirely happy as, in the final throes, he ran out Gough and then lost both the strike and the last man Silverwood more easily than he might have wished.

England's batting had looked comfortable enough to begin with but Streak's swing accounted for Knight and Stewart, at which point

Scores: England 152 Zimbabwe 153 for 8. Zimbabwe won by two wickets

Football Premiership: Liverpool 5 Middlesbrough 1

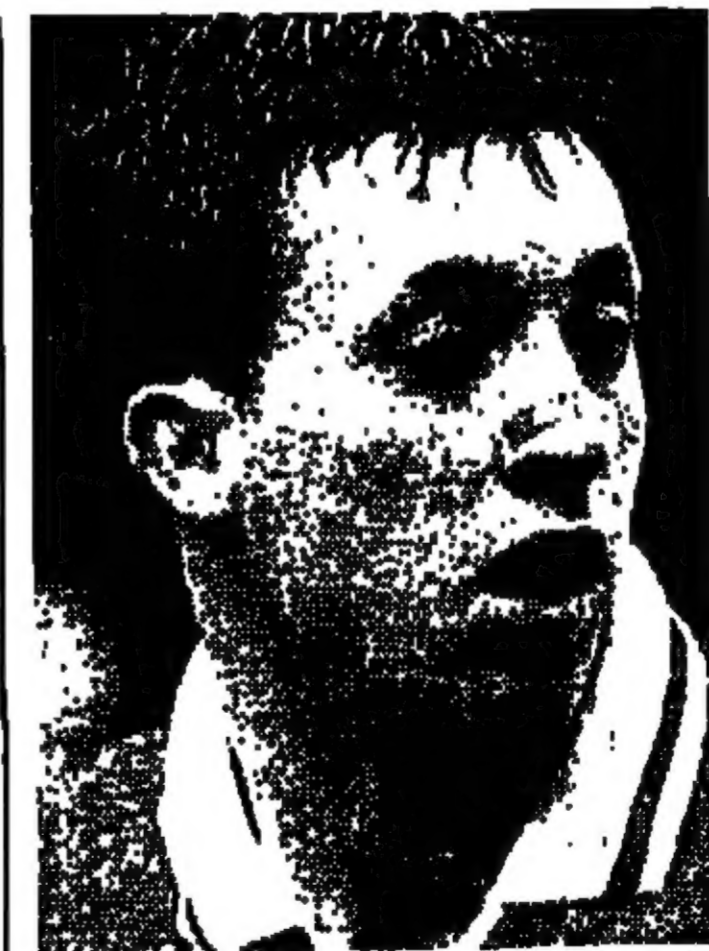
Fowler to the four

Jeremy Alexander

ROBBIE FOWLER, like a batsman on song, went past his century with a four. His second goal took him to the landmark in his 165th game for Liverpool, one fewer than Ian Rush. It is a momentous feat, completed within a performance of irresistible team momentum.

Towards the end at Anfield McAttee shot with organic ambition and the ball skewed to the far touchline. The crowd laughed — and laughed again when it became a perfect pass for Bjornebye. Liverpool, three up, were on a spree against a defence that had been dispersed like motorway cones, leaving a helpless hero behind. Fowler played the flat-track bully.

This is the context in which his achievement on the day should be judged. It was too easy, so that a dozen chances escaped as well, ranging from the simple to the spectacularly optimistic. Even Fowler missed two of them, carried along by the tide of glee. But he is the



Beating the Rush... 102 goals in 165 games for Fowler

poacher par excellence. When it mattered, his eye was keen, his balance superb, his execution infallible.

His first, after 29 seconds, was straightforward and set Liverpool at ease when they might have been on edge; two points from three home games had left the crowd restless to the point of hostility. His second was sharply reactive to a rebound, his third (straight after Boro's in-off) clinical, his fourth magical with twist and sleight of foot turning

Whyte into a corkscrew. He has an instinct and confidence where others, especially McManaman, have a hang-up. Bjornebye scored the other and Collymore had a part in four. He, above all, revelled in the space that Boro could not get to.

Boro's defenders were in the wrong place all afternoon. The previous week Atherton had marked McManaman into anonymity and Sheffield Wednesday won 1-0, but Bryan Robson paid no heed. Denied the defensive experience of Pearson, Fleming, Vickers and Morris, as well as Juninho in attack, the Boro manager plumped for a free-wheeling approach when discipline was his only hope after 11 league games without victory. It put the ball into Liverpool's court and they returned it, as often as they cared, into Boro's net.

Robson could do with a fortnight's break instead of the festive gift of fixtures. He needs to restore Ravanelli's interest as much as to integrate Emerson, to bash heads and reinforce the club's ambition. On the opening day the Italian scored a hat-trick in the 4-3 draw with Liverpool. Now, without a goal in four games, he is burying his silver head in shrugging shoulders, sulking for £7 million. Fowler scored four for nothing.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Williams faces trial

FRANK WILLIAMS, chief of the Formula One team, is to go on trial with five others charged with manslaughter over the death of Brazilian driver, Ayrton Senna.

A lawyer for Mr Williams said a trial had been set for February 20 in Italy and added that the first hearing would be before a judge at Imola, where Senna was killed in a crash during the San Marino Grand Prix on May 1, 1994.

DAMON HILL, winner of the Formula One world title in October, was named the BBC's Sports Personality of the Year on Sunday — the second time he has won the award. Hill collected it in 1994 when he missed the world title by one point. He said he was "enormously proud" to have been honoured in this way. "This really makes my year for me," Hill added.

Rower Steve Redgrave, who won Britain's only medal in the Atlanta Olympics and his fourth in the coxless pairs, was second, while jockey Frankie Dettori, winner of seven races in one day, finished third.

Meanwhile, Borussia Dortmund's Matthias Sammer is on course to win the 1996 European Footballer of the Year award. He was believed to have won two-thirds of the votes in the annual poll run by the magazine, France Football. Barcelona's Brazilian, Ronaldo, was in second position while Britain's Alan Shearer was third.

IAIN DOWIE, who has not scored for West Ham in the Premiership since March 23, struck twice within 10 minutes in the first half for Northern Ireland in their World Cup qualifier against Albania in Belfast. It was their first victory in Group Nine. In Group Seven, the match between Wales and Turkey finished as a goalless draw, virtually ending Welsh hopes of qualifying for the finals in France.

Butcher launched England A's second innings, making 47 from 36 balls. He was eventually out when he trod on his stumps, but White and Jason Gallian saw the side to 106-4 at the close. Scores: England A 230 and 106 for 4; Queensland 298.

During the tour, Butcher was the most successful batsman, scoring 264 runs in five innings at an average of 52.8, closely followed by White at 51. White headed the bowling table with 11 for 178 at an average of 16.18. England A won six games, drew three and lost one.

INDIA beat South Africa by 280 runs in the third and final Test at Kanpur to wrap up the series 2-1. It was South Africa's first series defeat since returning to international cricket in 1991. The visitors, set a victory target of 461, were bowled out after lunch on the final day for 180. Scores: India, 237 and 400 for 7 dec (Mohammad Azharuddin 163no); South Africa 177 and 180.

LIAM BOTHAM, son of former England cricket all-rounder Ian, has decided he will play a different ball game. The 19-year-old is not following in his father's footsteps, choosing to pursue a career in Rugby Union. Only months after a much-hailed first-class cricket debut for Hampshire in which he took five wickets, he has signed a contract to play rugby for West Hartlepool.

IT WAS more of the same when Rikidick Bowe of America and Poland's Andrew Golota squared up to each other in the boxing ring for the second time in five months, at Atlantic City on Saturday. Bowe, behind on all three judges' cards, benefited from Golota's penchant for throwing low blows and won on a disqualification. During the bout Bowe hit the canvas twice, while Golota was knocked down once.

JACKIE STEWART, the 57-year-old three-times world motor-racing champion, is back in the title hunt, this time with his own grand prix team. Last week his team car, the Stewart-Ford SF1, was unveiled in London. The Ford V10-powered car will be on the grid when the new F1 season begins in March.

Football results

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP Leeds 0, Tottenham 0; Liverpool 5, Middlesbrough 1; Sunderland 3, Chelsea 0; Wimbledon 1, Blackburn 0; Derby 0, Everton 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Arsenal (played 17, points 25); 2, Liverpool (17-34); 3, Wimbledon (17-34).

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE First Division Barnsley 3, Tranmere 0; Birmingham P, W.B.A. P; Bolton 1, Ipswich 2; Bradford P, Reading P; Charlton 1, Port Vale 3; Norwich 1, Crystal Palace 1; Oxford 4, Sheffield Utd 1; Portsmouth 3, Huddersfield 1; QPR 4, Southampton 0; Stoke 2, Swindon 0; Wolves 0, Colham 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Bolton (23-42); 2, Barnsley (22-41); 3, Sheffield Utd (22-39).

Second Division Braintree 1, Millwall 1; Bristol City 1, Bristol Rovers 1; Burnley 1, Brentford 2; Gillingham 2, Bury 2; Luton 4, Crewe 0; Notts Co 0, Rotherham 0; Rye House 2, Shrewsbury 2; Shropshire 0, Peterborough 0; Westham 1, Bolton (23-42); 2, Barnsley (22-41); 3, Sheffield Utd (22-39).

Third Division Brighton 3, Hull 0; Carlisle 1, Wigan 1; Chester 2, Darlington 1; Fulham 1, Leyton 1; Newport 2, Cardiff 3; Lincoln 1, Northampton 1; Mansfield 1, Colchester 1;

Rochdale 1, Hartlepool 3; Southport 4, Exeter 1; Torquay 1, Scarborough 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Fulham (23-48); 2, Carlisle (23-43); 3, Sheffield Utd (23-43).

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE Premier Division Aberdeen 0, Motherwell 0; Hibernian 1, Dundee Utd 1; Kilmarnock 2, Hearts 0; Raith P, Celtic P; Rangers 3, Dunfermline 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Rangers (18-38); 2, Aberdeen (17-28); 3, Celtic (17-34).

First Division Dundee 1, Shilling Aton 1; Falkirk 0, Morton 0; St Mirren 3, Partick 2. **Leading positions:** 1, St Johnston (17-38); 2, Falkirk (18-30); 3, Hamilton (17-34).

Third Division Alton P, Ross Co P; E Skirrow 1, Cowdenbeath 0; Forth P, Alton P; Queens Park 3, Arbroath 1; Inverness 2, Montrose 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Inverness (17-32); 2, Montrose (18-30); 3, Ross County (17-27).

TENNIS SCOTTISH CUP First round replay Forth 4, Auchin 0; Clyde 3, Huntly 2.

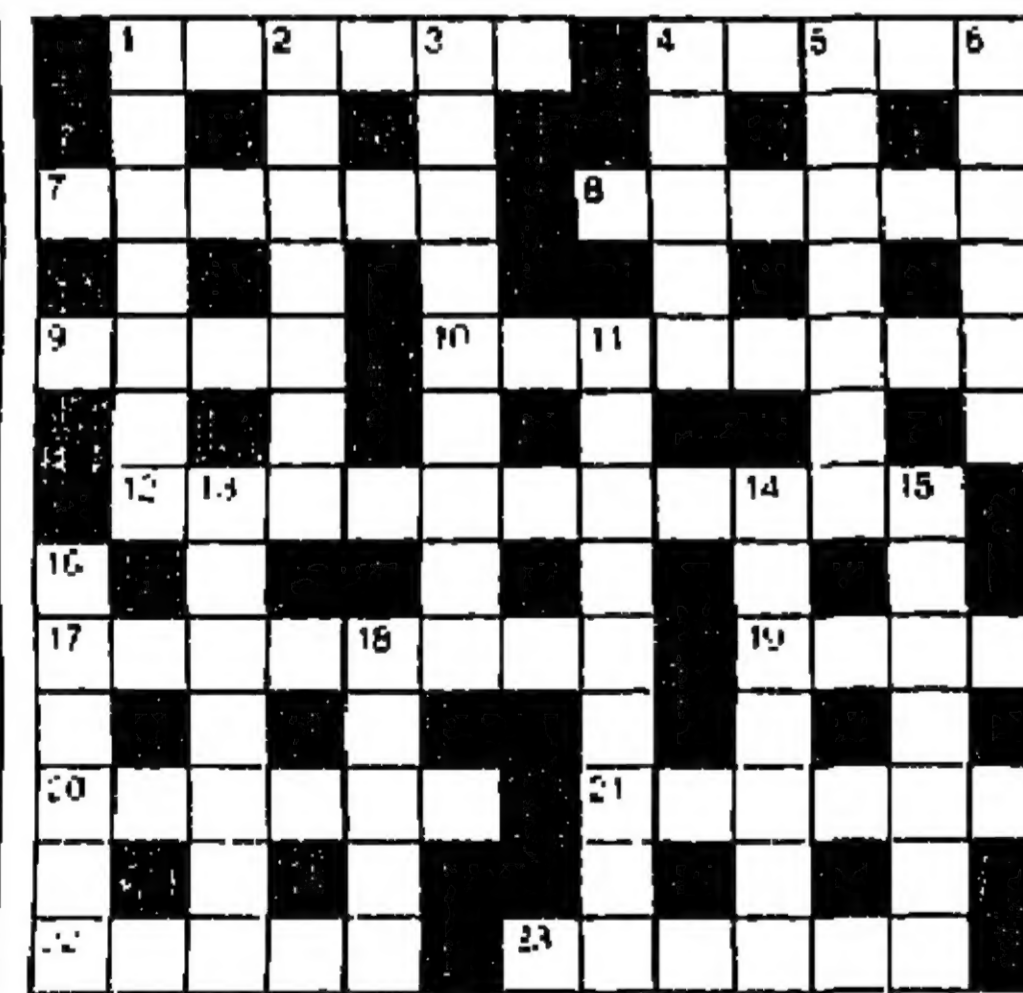
Quick crossword no. 345

Across

- 1 Doctor (Slang) (6)
- 4 Pattern (5)
- 7 US state, maybe baked (6)
- 8 Top (6)
- 9 Caribbean island (4)
- 10 Spanish dance (8)
- 12 Device, skill, or stratagem (11)
- 17 Guard of consumer interests (8)
- 19 Roman garment (4)
- 20 Frisk energy (6)
- 21 Slight pain (as of conscience) (6)
- 22 Thrust forward (8)
- 23 Cold and unresponsive (6)

Down

- 1 Shellfish (7)
- 2 Scorn (7)
- 3 Running on solid fuel (4-5)
- 4 Patent — or midday (5)
- 5 Fiendish (7)



Last week's solution



Bridge Zia Mahmood

HEATHER DHONDY and Liz McGowan of the British ladies' team formed an alliance with the Icelandic Open team to enter the World Mixed Teams championship, and stormed through to the final, where they came up against an all-professional US team that contained two world champions.

Take the East cards on the deal below, and see if you can defeat South's grand slam:

North (dummy)

♠ 4
♥ AK 6 5 2
♦ K 3
♣ 9 7 6 4 3

East (you)

♠ 10 8 5
♥ J 10 8 4 3
♦ J
♣ Q 10 5 2

This has been the bidding (see top of next column). Two diamonds was fourth suit forcing, four no trumps was simple Blackwood. West, your partner, leads the ten of diamonds, which is consistent with 109 and others or Q109 and others on your methods. South wins in hand with the ace and cashes six rounds of spades, having begun

South	West	North	East
1♠	No	2♣	No
2♠	No	3♠	No
4NT	No	5♠	No
7NT	No	No	No

with AKQJ32 in the suit. West follows to three rounds, then discards the queen, two and four of diamonds. Declarer throws four clubs and a heart from dummy. You can spare a heart and a club on the fourth and fifth spades, but what will you discard on the sixth?

It appears that West began with Q109842 in diamonds, and South with A765. If South has the queen of hearts, you need to keep that suit guarded and trust your partner for the king of clubs. But if South began with a void in hearts and AKx of clubs, you must throw a heart on the sixth spade in order to protect the club suit. The full deal is shown, above right.

In practice, the US East player threw a second club on the last spade. Liz McGowan's AK8 of clubs were now good, and she made her contract with six spade tricks, two hearts, two diamonds and three clubs. There were two clues which might have guided East to the right

North	♦ 4 ♥ AK 6 5 2 ♦ K 3 ♣ 9 7 6 4 3
West	♠ 9 7 6 ♥ Q 9 7 ♦ Q 10 9 8 4 2 ♣ J
East	♠ 10 8 5 ♥ J 10 8 4 3 ♦ J ♣ Q 10 5 2
South	♠ AKQJ32 ♥ None ♦ A 7 6 5 ♣ AK 8

discard. South had jumped to 7NT on learning only that her partner had one ace; with a hand such as:

she would hardly have been in a position to bid the grand slam without checking for kings in the North hand. And if West did not have a guard in hearts, he should have let you know the position by discarding hearts on the run of the spades. Since the contract was six spades at the other table, East's error cost her side 30 IMPs — and the British-Icelandic combination won the World Championship by just 11.

